THE

PROGRESS OF ROMANCE,

THROUGH

TIMES, COUNTRIES, AND MANNERS;

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE

GOOD AND BAD EFFECTS OF IT,

ON THEM RESPECTIVELY;

IN A COURSE OF

EVENING CONVERSATIONS.

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Author of the ENGLISH BARON, The TWO MENTORS, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. 2 Vols in 1

It hath bene through all ages ever ſeene,
That with the praiſe of armes and chevalrie
The prize of beautie ſtill hath ioyned beene,
And that for reaſons ſpeciall privitee,
For either doth on other much relie:
For he me ſeemes moſt fit the faire to ſerve,
That can her beſt defend from villenie.
And ſhe moſt fit his ſervice doth deſerve,
That faireſt is, and from her faith will never ſwerve.

SPENCER's Faery Queen. Book 4. Canto 5. Stanza 1.

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PREFACE.

ROMANCES may not improperly be called the polite literature of early ages, and they have been the favourite amuſements of later times. In rude and barbarous ages, they reſided in the breath of oral tradition, in civilized nations they were of courſe committed to writing; and in ſtill more poliſhed periods, they have varied their forms, and have appeared either in proſe or verſe, according to the genius of the writers, or the taſte of the times.

In the following pages, I have endeavoured to trace the progreſs of this ſpecies of compoſition, through all its ſucceſſive ſtages and variations, to point out its moſt ſtriking effects and influence upon the manners, and to aſſiſt according to my beſt judgment, the reader's choice, amidſt the almoſt infinite variety it affords, in a ſelection of ſuch as are moſt worthy of a place in the libraries of readers of every claſs, who ſeek either for information or entertainment.

How far I have ſucceeded in this attempt, muſt now be left to the deciſion of that tribunal which I have ever approached with the moſt reſpectful diffidence; and whoſe indulgence, I am perhaps in the preſent inſtance concerned more than ever to implore.

While many eminent writers have (if I may be permitted the alluſion) ſkimmed

med over the ſurface of this ſubject, it ſeemed to me that none of them had ſounded the depths of it.—Of metrical Romances they have treated largely, but with reſpect to thoſe in proſe, their informations have been ſcanty and imperfect.

When they approach that period of obſcurity, which began with the ſpreading of Chriſtianity over the Weſtern world, they drop entirely the latter and equally eſſential branch of the ſubject; nor do they reſume it, till the ſixteenth Century, when *Calprenede*, the *Scuderies*, *D'Urſe*, and other French writers, revived the taſte for proſe Romances, by their productions.

To fill up this chaſm in the hiſtory of Romance, to rectify the miſtakes that have been made by indiſcriminate praiſe

or blame, to methodiſe and arrange the works themſelves, and to aſcertain as many of the Authors, and the dates of them as I could get information of, to mark the diſtinguiſhing characters of the Romance and the Novel, to point out the boundaries of both: and laſtly to preſent to the reader's eye a ſelection of the beſt writings of both kinds.

Theſe objects would, I thought, have a fair claim to the attention of the public; and if executed with fidelity and judgment, would I hoped merit its approbation and encouragement.

While I was collecting materials for this work, I held many converſations with ſome ingenious friends upon the various ſubjects, which it offered to be inveſtigated and explained. This circumſtance naturally ſuggeſted to me the

the Idea of the dialogue form; in which oppoſite ſentiments would admit of a more full and accurate examination, arguments and objections might be more clearly ſtated and diſcuſſed, than in a regular ſeries of Eſſays, or even letters, not to mention, that the variety and contraſt which naturally ariſe out of the Dialogue, might enliven a work of rather dry deduction, and render it more entertaining to the reader, and not the leſs uſeful or inſtructive.—In this idea I was confirmed by the great ſucceſs of ſome late writers in this way, particularly of *Madame de Genlis*, in her excellent work called the *Theatre of Education*.

It was not till I had compleated my deſign, that I read either Dr. *Beattie*'s *Diſſertation on Fable and Romance*, or Mr. *Warton*'s *Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry*.

—To

—To the perusal of these books, I was most strongly recommended by two friends, to whom I had shewn my own work, and to whose judgment I owe all possible respect and deference.—I obeyed their injunctions, and have additional obligations to them for the entertainment afforded me by these excellent writers.—I soon found that they neither interfered with my plan, nor had anticipated my subject, yet I own I was well pleased, that neither of these books had fallen in my way before I had finished my own work; as otherwise it might have been supposed that I had borrowed my lights from them, wherever there happened to be a concurrence of opinion or of representation.

Dr. *Beattie* has walked over the ground, and marked out its boundaries, but he has paid little attention to its various

various produce, whether of flowers, herbs, or weeds; except a very few works of capital merit, (ſome of which he confeſſes he had not read through) he conſigns all the reſt to oblivion. Thus Genius thinks it enough to ſtrike out the outline, and leaves to induſtry and inferior talents, the minuter parts, and more laborious taſk of detail and arrangement.

From Mr. *Warton*'s *Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry*, I might indeed have derived conſiderable advantages, had I met with it ſooner. I was happy however, to find, that in many inſtances, my opinions were confirmed, and my arguments ſtrengthened by this learned and judicious writer.

It had long been a received opinion, that Romances were communicated to the

the Weſtern world by the Cruſades.—Mr. *Warton* allows that they were introduced at a much earlier period, viz. by the Saracens; who came from Africa, and ſettled in Spain, about the beginning of the eighth Century.—From Spain he imagines, they found an eaſy paſſage into France and Italy.—He further examines the *Hypotheſes* of Dr. *Percy* and Mr. *Mallet*; who derive theſe fictions from the antient ſongs of the Gothic Bards and Scalds: this Idea he allows to be well founded, ſo far at leaſt as it does not exclude his own Syſtem.—Theſe fictions (he ſays) had taken deep root in Europe, and prepared the way for the *Arabian* fables which were introduced in the ninth Century, by which they were in a great meaſure ſuperſeded.

That Chivalry, which was the ſubſtance of Romance, exiſted among the Goths

Goths he allows, but adds, that under the Feudal eſtabliſhment, it received new ſtrength and vigour, and was inveſted with the formalities of a regular inſtitution.—Which Dr. *Percy* likewiſe acknowledges in his remarks on Chivalry; the paſſage is quoted in the body of this work.—Mr *Warton* next proceeds to the Minſtrels, Troubadours, and early poets of this country, which is his proper ſubject; it was entirely beſide his plan to enter further into the ſubject of proſe Romances.

It is remarkable, that among the many learned and ingenious writers who have treated this ſubject, few have taken proper notice of the Greek Romances, which may juſtly be deemed the parents of all the reſt. The learned men of our own country have in general affected a contempt for this kind of writing,

writing, and looked upon Romances, as proper furniture only for a lady's Library.—Not ſo the French and Italian writers; on the contrary they have not only deemed them worthy their own attention, but have laboured to make them deſerving of ours.

I mean not however to include all the learned of our country under this obſervation.—The names of *Hurd*, *Beattie*, *Warton*, *Percy*, and *Mallet*, are an honourable exception, a ſubject that has been thought worthy of any portion of their time and attention, cannot be undeſerving the notice and protection of the public. It is with ſincere pleaſure I add a name that will not diſgrace the liſt, a writer of my own ſex, Mrs. *Dobſon*, the elegant writer of the *Hiſtory of the Troubadours* and the *Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry*.

In

In anſwer to ſome objections, made by a learned writer, whoſe friendſhip does me honour, to my account of the antiquity of Romance-writing; I was led to aſk him, why the fictions of the Ægyptians and Arabians, of the Greeks and Romans, were not entitled to the appellations of Romances, as well as thoſe of the middle ages, to which it was generally appropriated?—I was anſwered by another queſtion.—What did I know of the Romances of thoſe countries? Had I ever ſeen an Ægyptian Romance? I replied, yes, and I would ſhortly give him a proof of it. I accordingly compiled and methodiſed the *Hiſtory of Charoba Queen of Ægypt.*—My friend was ſurpriſed and puzzled, and anſwered me to this effect.

"I return your Ægyptian ſtory with "thanks; whence you took it, or how "far

" far it is your own I know not."—As I think this piece a great literary curioſity, I ſhall give it to the public at the end of this work.—That I may not appear to claim a right to the invention of this ſtory, I ſhall inform my readers from whence it is taken.—It is extracted from a book called—*The Hiſtory of Ancient Ægypt, according to the Traditions of the Arabians.—Written in Arabic, by the Reverend Doctor Murtadi, the Son of Gapiphus, the Son of Chatem, the Son of Molſem the Macdeſian.—Tranſlated into French by M. Vattier, Arabic Profeſſor to Louis 14th King of France.*

This tranſlator in his Preface ſpeaks of this ſtory in high terms. " Were " there nothing in this ſtory (ſays he) " worthy of our notice but the Fable " of Gebirus and Charoba, with the " Adventure of the Shepherd, and the " Sea-

" Sea-nymph, I ſhould not repent of
" my trouble in this Tranſlation.—I
" little thought to find in an Arabian
" writer, a ſtory ſo nearly reſembling
" the fables of the Greek and Latin
" poets.—While I was writing, it fre-
" quently reminded me of the 4th book
" of the Odyſſey, and of ſeveral parts
" of *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoſes*.

This ſtory is mentioned in the ingenious Mrs. *Rowe*'s *Hiſtory of Joſeph*, a poem not ſo much known and valued as it deſerves to be.—I truſt that my readers will not be diſpleaſed with a quotation from it.

When Totis by his death, the ſole command
Of Miſraim left to fair Charoba's hand;
The rich Gebirus from Chaldea came
With foreign pomp to ſeek the royal dame.
Chemis adorn'd his train, whoſe beauteous face
Allur'd a goddeſs of the watery race;
On Nilus' banks the young Chaldean ſtood,

When

When lo Marina riſing from the flood!
Her chariot ſet with pearl, the wave divides,
Softly along the ſilver ſtream ſhe glides,
Her robes with ſparkling gems tranſparent ſhine,
Her brighter eyes expreſs a light divine,
Not from her humid bed the blooming day
Has e'er aſcended with a brighter ray.
She leaves her cryſtal vaults and coral groves
And o'er the graſſy meads with Chemis roves.
At parting gave him a celeſtial ſpell
Which every good procures, and ills expel;
My mother from this pair derives her line
And this ſhe left me, as a gift divine,
By all her Anceſtors preſerv'd with Care;
One drop of this ſhall baniſh all deſpair.

MIS. ROWE'S HIST. OF JOSEPH, Book 6th.

This curious ſtory will ſufficiently anſwer my purpoſe, if it only furniſhes an additional proof that Romances are of univerſal growth, and not confined to any particular period or countries. They were the delight of barbarous ages, and they have always kept their ground amongſt the multiplied amuſements of more refined and cultivated periods,

riods, containing like every other branch of human literature, both good and evil things. They are not to be put into the hands of young perſons without diſtinction and reſerve, but under proper reſtrictions and regulations they will afford much uſeful inſtruction, as well as rational and elegant amuſement. In this view therefore they are equally entitled to our attention and reſpect, as any other works of Genius and literature.

PROGRESS

PROGRESS OF ROMANCE.

EVENING I.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Euph. HORTENSIUS, I am proud of a viſit from you, tho' I am ignorant of the motive to which I am indebted for it.

Hort. What, Madam, do you think you can give a challenge, and go off with impunity?—I am come hither to demand an explanation of your behaviour laſt Thurſday evening at *Sophronia*'s houſe; and I have brought her with me to be a witneſs to our diſpute—of the defeat of one of us,—or perhaps of our compromiſe, and reconciliation.

Soph. Or that *Euphraſia* ſhall make a convert to her own opinion.

Euph. I am obliged to the occaſion that brings you both to ſpend an hour with me.—Pray be ſeated, my friends, and let me underſtand your meaning.—Surely I was not ſo preſumptuous as to challenge *Hortenſius?*

Hort. I will not ſuffer you either by raillery or compliment to evade my purpoſe.—In the courſe of our late converſation, you threw out ſeveral hints that ſtruck me as either *new*, or *uncommon*, in reſpect to the works of the ancient and modern writers;—but what ſurprized me moſt of all, you ſeemed to degrade Epic poetry, and to place it on an equality with the old Romance. I wiſh you to explain your ſentiments on this head, for I cannot account for your defence of a kind of writings that are generally exploded. I little expected to hear *Euphraſia* ridicule the works of the great Ancients.—(You ſmile)—Yes, Madam, raillery was the only weapon you deigned to uſe, in oppoſition to my arguments.—Yet you told me you had better reaſons in reſerve, but you did not chooſe then to enter upon the ſubject, as it would engroſs too much of our time and attention.

Euph.

Euph. Your memory, Sir, is very retentive, and there is no warding off your attack; perhaps I only ſeemed to degrade your favourites, and exalt the others, becauſe I oppoſed opinions long received, and but little examined; while in reality I only meant to place each in their proper rank, both as to merit and utility.

Hort. To convince me of that, you muſt give me a full explanation of your opinions in reſpect to both, and alſo of the foundation of them.

Soph. I have promiſed in your behalf that you ſhall give *Hortenſius* full ſatisfaction, and my honour is engaged for it—I know this is a ſubject you are not unprepared to ſpeak upon.

Euph. Methinks you demand no trifling ſatisfaction for my Challenge, as it pleaſes you to call it. However I ſhall not refuſe to comply with your requeſt, if you can have patience to liſten, while I inveſtigate a ſubject of greater extent than perhaps you may ſuppoſe, and which though I am not quite unprepared for, I am afraid to begin.

Soph. My dear friend, it is your patience and not ours that will be tired. I am very deſirous to hear this ſubject diſcuſſed, and to be informed by the converſation of two ſuch opponents. I expect from *Euphraſia*'s reading and obſervation much advantage to myſelf.

Hort. My expectations, Madam, do not fall ſhort of yours.

Euph. No compliments, my good friends! my reading and obſervations are very much at your ſervice, I wiſh they may afford you information or entertainment. I will confeſs to you that I have conſidered this ſubject deeply, and that I have written ſome remarks upon it.—I have made many extracts from different Authors, and collected materials of various kinds; always intending to methodize them one time or other.—I will bring my papers before you, communicate my remarks, propoſe my opinions; and either be confirmed in them by your approbation, or be ſilenced by your better arguments on the contrary ſide;—perhaps I may be enabled to

ſtrike

ſtrike out new lights upon the ſubject, when my imagination is corrected by the judgment of *Hortenſius*.

Hort. No compliments I repeat. I wiſh I may be able to ſtand my ground. I find you are making great preparations againſt me, you are coming upon me armed with your papers and extracts.—Artillery and fire-arms againſt the ſmall ſword, the tongue.

Euph. A moſt warlike alluſion! and the compariſon holds good; for if I ſhould come to a cloſe engagement, the ſmall ſword will deſtroy what may eſcape the artillery.

Hort. Fairly replied.—The attack is begun, I have queſtioned you cloſely, it is your part to maintain your own opinions. You have ſaid that Romances are neither ſo contemptible, nor ſo dangerous a kind of reading, as they are generally repreſented—you have compared them to Epic poems.

Euph. Let me firſt entreat you, my good friends, to diveſt yourſelves of common prejudices:—excuſe the expreſſion.—Mankind in general are more biaſſed by names than things;

things; and what is yet ſtranger, they are biaſſed by names to which they have not affixed an abſolute and determinate meaning. —For inſtance—pray what do you underſtand by the word Romance?

Hort. By Romance I underſtand a wild extravagant, fabulous ſtory.

Euph. Sophronia, favour me with an explanation of this word? It is not merely a queſtion of idle curioſity.

Soph. I underſtand it to mean all thoſe kind of ſtories that are built upon fiction, and have no foundation in truth.

Euph. You will pleaſe to reflect, that under this general denomination of Romance, a vaſt genus of compoſition is included, works of various kinds, merits, and tendencies. It is running ſome hazard, to praiſe or to decry in general terms, without being perfectly acquainted with the whole extent of the ſubject under conſideration.

Hort. What is it neceſſary to read all the traſh contained in this Genus, as it pleaſes you to call it, in order to ſpeak of any part of it?

Euph.

Euph. By no means, I will explain this point preſently.—No writings are more different than the ancient *Romance* and modern *Novel*, yet they are frequently confounded together, and miſtaken for each other. There are likewiſe great diſtinctions to be made between the *old Greek* Romances, thoſe of the middle ages, and thoſe of the fifteenth and ſixteenth Centuries. Books of all theſe kinds have been enthuſiaſtically read and admired; of late years they have been as abſurdly cenſured and condemned. If read indiſcriminately they are at beſt unprofitable, frequently productive of abſurdities in manners and ſentiments, ſometimes hurtful to good morals; and yet from this Genus there may be ſelected books that are truly reſpectable, works of genius, taſte, and utility, capable of improving the morals and manners of mankind.

Soph. I am entirely of your opinion, and give my teſtimony to this truth.

Euph. It ſeems to me that this Genus of compoſition has never been properly diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed or aſcertained; that it wants to be methodized, to be ſeparated, claſſed, and regulated; and that a work of this kind would be both entertaining and uſeful.

Soph. Doubtleſs it would, and you give us hopes of ſeeing this accompliſhed.

Hort. I perceive that you are laying a deep foundation, but what kind of building you will raiſe upon it, I am impatient to hear.

Euph. If you will honour me with your attention, and ſometimes give me your aſſiſtance, we will at leiſure hours purſue this ſubject together. Let me beſpeak your favour, by aſſuring you that I mean to do ſomething more than merely to inveſtigate *names*:—we will afterwards proceed to conſider the beauties and defects of theſe writings, of the uſes and abuſes, and of their effects upon the manners of the times in which they were written. I propoſe to trace Romance to its Origin, to follow its progreſs through the different periods to its declenſion, to ſhew how the modern Novel ſprung up out of its ruins, to examine and compare the merits of both, and to remark upon the effects of them.

Hort.

Hort. Upon my word you do well to lay a deep foundation, the ſuperſtructure will require it: if it be well executed it will do you honour, and without a compliment, I think you equal to this undertaking.

Euph. You may be miſtaken, and yet I may be entitled to your allowance,—the deſign may be good though the execution ſhould fall ſhort. I always mean more than I can expreſs;—my materials increaſe upon me, inſomuch that I fear I may be encumbered by the number and variety of them. I ſhall depend upon your aſſiſtance, and ſince you have opened my mouth upon the ſubject, you are bound in honour to correct my redundancies, and to ſupply my deficiencies.

Hort. What to furniſh you with weapons for my defeat?

Euph. Not ſo, but to aſſiſt me in the courſe of my progreſs through the land of Romance. I purpoſe to remark upon the moſt eminent works of the kind, and to pay the tribute of praiſe to works of Genius and morality.

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Hort. I reſpect both the motive and the end too much to diſcourage you, and you may depend upon every aſſiſtance in my power.

Euph. Let then the preſent converſation ſerve as an introduction to our progreſs, the next time we meet we will purſue the ſubject more cloſely.

Hort. Let it be at my houſe next Thurſday, ladies!

Soph. Agreed, and let the Thurſday in every week be ſet apart for this purpoſe, till the progreſs is finiſhed.

Euph. With all my heart,—I will readily attend you in turn.

Hort. I am much obliged to you for your readineſs to gratify my curioſity, and ſhall expect next Thurſday with ſome impatience. —Adieu, Madam.

Eup. I ſhall depend upon you for encouragement when deſerved,—correction where I am miſtaken, and allowance where wanted. —Adieu, my friends.

EVENING

EVENING II.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Hort. LADIES, I rejoice to ſee you at my houſe on this occaſion. Let us lay aſide form and ceremony, and proceed to the buſineſs of our meeting.—I expect a pitch'd battle; for I ſee *Euphraſia* has brought her artillery and is placing them to advantage.

Euph. You know your advantages, and that a woman is your opponent.

Hort. Whether you mean me a compliment or reproof, is not clear.—But I will not reply to it, leſt it ſhould hinder buſineſs.—It lies upon you, Madam, to proceed with your inveſtigation.

Soph.

Soph. You are to explain to us the word Romance, of which it ſeems we have no certain Idea.

Euph. Since our laſt meeting I have not been idle.—I have conſulted all the Dictionary writers upon the ſubject, and I do not find that any of them are clear and certain in their definition of it.

Ainſworth and *Littleton* ſpeak in the following terms :—*Narratio ficta*,—*fabuloſa heroicorum facinorum hiſtoria.*—*Scriptum eroticum*—*ſplendida fabula.*

Boyer calls a Romance too conciſely—*un fable*—*une conte*—*un menſonge.*

Old *Dyche* and *Bailey*—a fiction, or feigned Story.

Dr. *Johnſon*—a military fable of the *middle ages* :—A tale of wild adventures of war and love.

With all reſpect to the Doctor's judgment,—I muſt affirm that this definition can only be proper to the Romances of the middle ages, but cannot extend to the whole Genus.

Hort.

Hort. A proper diſtinction—but what uſe will you make of it?

Euph. The Origin of Romance is of much higher date, as I hope to convince you,—but firſt let us ſpeak of the name.

Hort. How then would you define it?

Euph. By fixing a clear and certain meaning to it, not as of my own invention or judgment; but borrowing the idea of the Latiniſts, I would call it ſimply an *Heroic fable*,—a fabulous Story of ſuch actions as are commonly aſcribed to heroes, or men of extraordinary courage and abilities.—Or if you would allow of it, I would ſay an Epic in proſe.

Hort. I cannot allow of the laſt appellation, but to the firſt I make no objection. An Epic is a very ſuperior compoſition.

Euph. We will ſpeak of that hereafter. I do not deſpair of bringing you over to my definition; but let us firſt trace the Origin of our ſubject. Romances or Heroic fables are of very ancient, and I might ſay univerſal Origin. We find traces of them in all times, and

and in all countries: they have always been the favourite entertainment of the moſt ſavage, as well as the moſt civilized people. In the earlieſt accounts of all nations, we find they had traditional ſtories of their moſt eminent perſons, that is of their *Heroes*, to which they liſtened in raptures, and found themſelves excited to perform great actions, by hearing them recited;—they had their war-ſongs—and they had alſo their proſe narratives.

Hort. This is indeed a truth that cannot be denied. I did not expect ſo antient, nor ſo well authenticated an Origin, as you have given them.

Soph. I knew that *Euphraſia* would never advance, what ſhe could not defend,—proceed, Madam.

Euph. As a country became civilized, their narrations were methodized, and moderated to probability.—From the proſe recitals ſprung Hiſtory,—from the war-ſongs Romance and Epic poetry.

Hort. Hiſtory—Romance—and Epics, all in a breath!

Euph.

Euph. Let us firſt diſtinguiſh Hiſtory from the others.—When a nation became acquainted with letters, they could record facts, and this is the Æra of true Hiſtory. Before that time a ſtory, that at firſt was founded on facts, by length of time and paſſing through many hands, loſt many real circumſtances, and acquired many fictitious ones. The heathen Mythology is an unanſwerable proof of this truth;—what at firſt was the Hiſtory of mortal men, and their actions, was at length aſcribed to deities; and the veil of Allegory concealed and altered facts, till they could no longer be traced, and at laſt were loſt in fable and obſcurity. Theſe Stories, though no longer believed by wiſe men as truths, yet continued to pleaſe as agreeable fictions; and in more enlightened times, men of Genius and fancy, perceiving the pleaſure they gave, and how willingly they were received, imitated thoſe ancient fables, and in proceſs of time compoſed others of different kinds, following the track of their talents, and the temper of the times in which they lived.

Hort.

Hort. All this I allow.—But will you involve Hiſtory in this obſcurity?

Euph. By no means.—Let us now leave Hiſtory to her own ſtrength and evidence, as the nobleſt and moſt uſeful of all ſtudies; and let us proceed to Romance, and the Epic poem.

Hort. Romance and Epic again!—do you affirm that they are the ſame?

Euph. I do affirm it, and will endeavour to maintain it. They ſpring from the ſame root,—they deſcribe the ſame actions and circumſtances,—they produce the ſame effects, and they are continually miſtaken for each other.

Hort. Your pardon, Madam,—I muſt mention one material difference.—The Epic poem is always derived from ſome Hiſtorical fact, though perhaps remote and obſcure.

Euph. Remote and obſcure indeed.—So perhaps are ſome of the ſtories in *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoſes*,—but I will bring a fairer compariſon.—In the French Romances of the ſixteenth Century, they had their foundation in

in real Hiſtory; but the ſuperſtructure was pure fiction. I will not ſhelter myſelf under their authority, I will not ſpeak of them as reſpectable works.—Let us compromiſe.—If you will permit me to go on in my own way, perhaps I may anſwer your objections when you leaſt expect it, and I ſhall call upon you to make them in due time.

Hort. I will hear you with attention and impartiality: but I wiſh you to come to the point directly.

Soph. The diſpute waxes warm.—My dear *Euphraſia*, I expect you to anſwer all the ſcruples of *Hortenſius*.

Euph. Well then, I will come to the point you wiſh to bring me.—Mankind willingly adopt the prejudices of their anceſtors, they embrace them with affection, they quit them with reluctance. One of them is to decry Romance, and venerate Epic Poetry. I believe *Hortenſius* has as few prejudices as any man living; but I muſt think this to be a ſtrong one, and as ſuch I ſhall treat it, and endeavour to cure him of it.

Hort.

Hort. I hope I am open to conviction, and ready to acknowledge truth, whether it makes for or againſt me.—Proceed, Madam.

Euph. The Romances of all countries are derived from the bards. All countries have had their bards of early times, and their proſe Romances afterwards.—Leſt my opinion ſhould not be ſufficient, I ſhall refer you to Dr. *Percy*'s Eſſay on the old *Metrical Romances*, in which he has treated this ſubject, in ſo clear and judicious a manner, that nothing I can ſay is worthy to come after it.—You ſhall take it home with you, and it will prepare you for our next converſation. You will there find that Romances have been written both in proſe and verſe, and that according to the different circumſtances of the Author's genius and ſituation, they became Epics or Romances.

Hort. I will certainly read it, but I will not promiſe to receive it implicitly.—I cannot with any patience ſee *Homer* and *Virgil* degraded into writers of Romances.

Euph.

Euph. I would not willingly degrade thoſe great Poets: but I beg leave to diſtinguiſh them.——

Homer is univerſally acknowledged as the Prince of Epic poetry. If we may believe Dr. *Blackwell*, there was a wonderful concurrence of circumſtances, that elevated him to this high ſtation; circumſtances unlikely, perhaps impoſſible, to happen again to any other Poet, or at leaſt as improbable, as to find another Poet equally capable of uſing the ſame advantages:—but with all this eclat that ſurrounds him, *Homer* was the parent of Romance; wherever his works have been known, they have been imitated by the Poets and Romance writers.—I look upon *Virgil* as the moſt ſucceſsful of his Imitators.

Hort. This is what I call degrading both theſe divine men, which I did not expect from you, whom I reckoned among their admirers.

Euph. I am ſo ſtill, as much as poſſible, on this ſide Idolatry.—I venerate *Homer* as much as one unlearned in his own language can do. From *Pope*'s admired tranſlation I can diſcern

cern the ſtrong paintings of his bold imagination, his knowledge and judgment in marking his characters; and above all things the conſideration that the world owes to him, in a great meaſure, the knowledge of the Hiſtory and Manners of the times in which he wrote, and of ſome ages before him; on theſe and many other accounts, *Homer* muſt always claim our reſpect and even veneration.—But after all this can you forbear ſmiling at the extravagant ſallies of his imagination, can you approve his violent machinery, in which he degrades his deities below his heroes, and makes deities of men. In a word, if you will not ſmile with me, I know many of his admirers that will; in ſpite of the labours of his commentators, who ſtrive with all their ſtrength, to allegorize away his abſurdities.

Hort. Upon my word, Madam, you have made a bold attack; I am not prepared to anſwer you of a ſudden, but I ſhall do it hereafter.

Euph. In the mean time I am preparing to anticipate your anſwer, and to obviate your objections.

objections.—It is aſtoniſhing that men of ſenſe, and of learning, ſhould ſo ſtrongly imbibe prejudices, and be ſo loath to part with them. —That they ſhould deſpiſe and ridicule Romances, as the moſt contemptible of all kinds of writing, and yet expatiate in raptures, on the beauties of the fables of the old claſſic Poets,—on ſtories far more wild and extravagant, and infinitely more incredible.

Hort. It is becauſe we pay due reſpect to works of true Genius, and diſdain the compariſon of ſuch weak and paltry imitations, as thoſe you have undertaken to ſupport.

Euph. I am no ſtranger to the charms of Poetry, I have even felt a degree of its enthuſiaſm, yet I cannot ſacrifice the convictions of truth at its ſhrine, I am of opinion that many of the fine old Hiſtorical ballads, are equally entitled to the name of Epic Poems.

There are examples enough extant, of Romance in verſe, and Epics in proſe. I ſhall produce ſome of them in the courſe of our progreſs :—but at preſent I ſhall only mention the *Provencals*, or *Troubadours*,—and I refer you to Mrs. *Dobſon*'s account of them.

Hort.

Hort. You would engage me in a new courſe of reading, but I had rather you would give me your own arguments.

Euph. I am afraid they ſhould not be ſufficient, but I will try a ſhorter way with you. You think the divine *Homer* degraded by my compariſons, yet I will ſhew you a ſtriking reſemblance of him, in a work of much lower eſtimation:—Did you never read a book called the Arabian Nights Entertainments?

Hort. You cannot be in earneſt in this compariſon?

Euph. Indeed I am.—If you will take the trouble to read the Story of *Sindbad* the Sailor, in the firſt volume, you will think that either the genius of *Homer* was transfuſed into the writer, or elſe that he was well acquainted with his works; for he certainly reſembles *Homer* in many particulars.—In the boldneſs of his imagination,—in the variety of his characters,—and in the marvellous adventures he relates.—In the hiſtory of *Sindbad*, we have moſt of thoſe that *Ulyſſes* meets with in

in the Odyſſey: inſomuch that you muſt be convinced the likeneſs could not be accidental.

Soph. I can confirm your aſſertion by my teſtimony,—I have often been ſurprized at it.—But *Hortenſius* muſt read the ſtory in order to be convinced of the reſemblance.

Euph. Above all other points, the Arabian writer moſt reſembles *Homer* in his Machinery: with this difference however, that he is by far the moſt modeſt in the uſe of it.—*Homer* takes the liberty of ſending his deities perpetually on the moſt trifling errands,—it is true the Magicians of the Arabian perform very marvellous things, by the aſſiſtance of the good and evil Genii: but then they are all ſubordinate to the ſeal of the Sultan *Solomon* the ſon of *David*;—it is likewiſe worthy of obſervation, that throughout the whole work, the Supreme Being is never mentioned without the deepeſt marks of homage and veneration.

Give me leave to mention one more circumſtance relating to this work.—That all doubts

doubts of its Origin and Authenticity are removed by the teſtimony of ſeveral writers well acquainted with the original language: particularly by Lady *M. W. Montague*, and by Mr. *Jones;* both of whom bear teſtimony to the fidelity of the Engliſh tranſlation.

Hort. All that you have ſaid, will only prove that this Arabian writer imitated *Homer* as many others have done.

Euph. If I am not miſtaken, it will prove ſomething more;—namely, that there is frequently a ſtriking reſemblance between works of high and low eſtimation, which prejudice only, hinders us from diſcerning, and which when ſeen, we do not care to acknowledge: for the defects of a favourite Author, are like thoſe of a favourite friend; or perhaps ſtill more like our own.

Soph. A palpable hit, *Hortenſius!*—confeſs it?

Hort. I confeſs that *Euphraſia* has thrown out many things that have ſurprized, if they have not convinced me, and that I am very deſirous ſhe ſhould proceed.

Soph.

Soph. You will then read the Story of *Sindbad* the Sailor, at our requeſt.

Hort. I will,—but I will not promiſe to allow the compariſon.

Euph. Not before you are convinced that it is juſt.

Hort. In what claſs will you place your Arabian writer?

Euph. In one of which he is the Original —Eaſtern Tales:—of which I ſhall ſay more in due time and place. In the mean time, I beg leave to lay down two points as certain; upon which I ſhall eſtabliſh my ſyſtem.

Firſt, That Epic Poetry is the parent of Romance.

Secondly, That there is a certain degree of reſpect due to all the works of Genius, by whatever name diſtinguiſhed.—Grant me theſe two poſtulata, and I ſhall proceed regularly.

Hort. I find you will take them for granted. —But I put in a caveat, in objection to your dogmas.

Euph. I will call upon you to make them, at a proper time.

Hort. Then I will not interrupt you unſeaſonably: but perhaps I may ſometimes aſk for explanation.

Euph. I will moſt willingly hear and anſwer you, and I beg your aſſiſtance as we go forward.

Soph. It appears to me that *Euphraſia* has advanced nothing that ſhe has not proved, and I expect as ſhe proceeds that ſhe will explain herſelf ſtill further.

Euph. You do me honour,—and I hope juſtice likewiſe.

Hort. Well, *Euphraſia*,—I will follow you as cloſely as I can.

Euph. Having traced Romance to its Origin, I ſhall proceed with the progreſs of it: but this ſhall be the ſubject of our next converſation, it is now time to put an end to this.

Soph. Let us then adjourn to next Thurſday, at my houſe.

Hort. I will not fail to meet you there.

Soph.

Soph. What would your neighbour *Ergaſtus* ſay, if he ſhould hear that you meet weekly two women, to talk of Romances?

Hort. He would certainly indulge his ſplenetic humour at my expence.

Euph. If you are afraid of him, it will be beſt to give over our meetings, for I am meditating to tell the ſubject of them to all the world.

Hort. That is indeed enough to alarm one. I find I muſt take care of what I ſay before you.

Euph. Take courage, my friend.—I promiſe you never to make our converſation public, without your conſent and approbation.

Hort. On theſe conditions, I am ſatisfied; I dare ſay you will do nothing raſhly, nor without due conſideration.

Euph. I am honoured by your friendſhip and confidence.—Adieu till next Thurſday.

Soph. I ſhall reckon the hours till our next meeting.—Adieu!

EVENING III.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Hort. WELL met, my fair friends.—You ſee I am come, although I hazard the cenſure of *Ergaſtus*.—I proteſt *Euphraſia* has carried all her points triumphantly.—I ſhall be afraid to attack her in future.

Euph. You allow then, I had ſome foundation for my aſſertions.

Hort. I do;—and you have ſtaggered my opinions in ſome points that I thought immoveably fixed and certain:—but much is yet wanting to make me a perfect convert to yours.

Euph.

Euph. I ſhall not entirely rely upon my own ſtrength to effect your converſion, but occaſionally call in aſſiſtance from abler hands.

Soph. The porch is methinks big enough for the building.—Proceed.

Euph. My dear friend, the building is of greater extent than you imagine, but I will without further prefacing, plunge into the ſubject. I have traced Romance to an early Origin, and I have mentioned *Homer* as perhaps the firſt who gave it a regular model or form: I ſay *perhaps*, becauſe there might be others before him: for doubtleſs there were Stories tranſmitted from age to age, before they were committed to writing.

I have ſeen ſome Ægyptian ſtories, of the fabulous kind, that do not fall very ſhort of thoſe in the Mythology of the Greeks and Romans. The Greeks were always fond of theſe ſtories.

It is ſaid that one *Dearchus*, a diſciple of *Ariſtotle*, wrote Romances; and he has been called the firſt writer of them.

Antonius

Antonius Diogenes was the author of a work of this kind, called the Errors and Amours of *Dinias* and *Dercyllis*.

The Amours of *Rhodanis* and *Simonides*, are mentioned as very ancient.

The Romance of *Leucippé* and *Clitophon*, written by *Achilles Tatius*, a Greek, he was afterwards a Biſhop, and his works are ſtill extant.

The Epheſian Hiſtory by *Xenophon*, might be reckoned in this claſs; alſo the four books of incredible things, written by *Damaſius*.—Under the ſame claſs may be ranked the fables of *Parthonius Nicenus*,—of *Athenagoras*,—*Theodorus Prodromus*,—*Euſtathius*,—and *Longus*,—and many others doubtleſs, whoſe names are loſt.

Hort. From whence, and to what purpoſe have you conjured up ſuch a liſt of uncouth names—to frighten us.

Euph. Only to ſhew you that the Ancients had their Romances, as well as later times,—of theſe works many are loſt, and perhaps you would not be much pleaſed with thoſe that remain.

Hort.

Hort. I am a ſtranger to them all, except the Epheſian Hiſtory of *Xenophon.*

Euph. I will be more particular in the next I ſhall mention.—One of the moſt ancient and famous proſe Romances is, The Æthiopic Hiſtory of *Heliodorus*, Biſhop of Tricca in Theſſalia, in the fourth century. It is related, that a Synod conſidering the danger that might happen to youth, from reading a Romance (though there is nothing in it, in the leaſt degree offenſive to morals or modeſty,) authoriſed by the dignity of its author; propoſed to him either to burn his book, or reſign his Biſhopric, and that he choſe the latter. There are many teſtimonies of the merits of this book, both from ancient, and modern writers; but there needs no other evidence, than the circumſtance of its having been ſucceſſively tranſlated into all the known languages.

Hort. Has it ever been tranſlated into Engliſh?

Euph. Yes certainly, I cannot ſay how early; I do not know of any tranſlation before

fore that of 1687. About the year 1720, there was a new and pompous Edition, publiſhed under the ſecond Title of *Theagenes* and *Chariclea*, which I have ſeen likewiſe, but I have ſome reaſon to believe it was never a popular book here.

Hort. Pray give us your opinion of it?

Euph. It is indiſputably a work of Genius, and as ſuch will always be reſpectable; and moreover, it is one of thoſe Romances that are immediately derived from *Homer*.—The manners of it are evidently imitative of him, and I deſire you to reſpect it on this account.

Hort. Suppoſe I were diſpoſed to read it, where is it to be found?

Euph. In my own library, at your ſervice. There are doubtleſs many more of the ſame kind that are now ſunk into oblivion: but this may ſerve as a ſpecimen of the Ancient Romance.

Soph. You are got ſo far beyond my depth, that I have little to ſay; but I flatter myſelf you will come within my reach in due time. I thought myſelf well read in Romance, but

I know nothing of any work you have yet mentioned.

Euph. I ſhall ſoon come to your liſt, but not juſt at preſent.—I ſhall ſpeak firſt of the Romances of the middle ages; but before I begin I ſhall read you ſome extracts from Dr. *Percy*, which will be of great ſervice in our progreſs through the Regions of Romance.

" That our old Romances of Chivalry " may be derived in a lineal deſcent from the " ancient Hiſtorical ſongs of the Gothic " bards and ſcalds will be ſhown :—and in- " deed appears the more evident as many of " theſe ſongs are ſtill preſerved in the North, " which exhibit all the ſeeds of Chivalry be- " fore it became a ſolemn inſtitution.

" Chivalry, as a diſtinct military order, con- " ferred in the way of inveſtiture, and ac- " companied with the ſolemnity of an oath, " and other ceremonies, was of later date, " and ſprung out of the feudal conſtitu- " tion.—But the ideas of Chivalry prevail- " ed long before in all the Gothic nation,

" and may be diſcovered as in embryo, in the " cuſtoms, manners, and opinions, of every " branch of that people.—That fondneſs of " going in queſt of adventures, that ſpirit of " challenging to ſingle combat, and that " reſpectful complaiſance to the fair ſex, (ſo " different from the manners of the Greeks " and Romans), are all of Gothic origin, " and may be traced up to the earlieſt times " among all the northern nations. Theſe " exiſted long before the feudal ages, though " they were called forth and ſtrengthened in " a peculiar manner under that conſtitution, " and at length arrived at their full maturity " in the time of the Cruſades, ſo replete with " Romantic adventures."——This extract will I hope anſwer all your doubts and ſcruples, *Hortenſius*.

Hort. I confeſs it confirms your aſſertions, and anſwers your intentions.

Euph. I will tell you my intention,—it is not to take the honour of making you a convert to myſelf, but to abler hands.

Hort.

Hort. Then you muſt think me prejudiced indeed.—No, Madam, I will owe my conviction to nobody, if not to you.

Soph. That is handſomely ſaid, and I dare ſay will be made good.—I beg you, my dear friend, to proceed.

Euph. It is a general received opinion, that the firſt Romances of Chivalry were written in France.—I think it very doubtful.—I ſuppoſe them to have been current in Spain long before: for the Moors were converſant in them, and many of the old Spaniſh Romances were of Mooriſh derivation; as appears from the ſtories themſelves.

Soph. I have heard that the name is derived from the French, and it ſeems to me that the Provençals called their works Romaunts.

Euph. That is very true.—Dr. *Percy* will confirm this truth alſo.—"The Latin tongue, "ceaſed to be ſpoke in French about the ninth "Century, and was ſucceeded by a mixture "of the language of the Franks and bad La-"tin, which was called the Romaunce tongue. "As the ſongs of Chivalry, became the moſt "popular

" popular compoſitions in that language, " they were emphatically called Romans, " Romants, or Romanic, and though this " name was at firſt given to either proſe, " or poetry, it came by degrees to be appro- " priated to proſe only, and is now in general " ſo uſed."

Hort. I have long waited to hear the Etymology of this word, and I expected a different derivation of it.

Euph. Will you favour us with your own ſentiments on this head?

Hort. I always thought it was derived from the Romans, but in what manner I was ignorant. I conjectured that it aroſe from an imitation of their manners.

Euph. I have been deſirous to inform myſelf in this particular, and I give you the beſt account I can meet with.—I have read ſomewhere, that the inhabitants of Nomandy, were formerly called Romandii, or Romandui, which ſeems to me the more proper Etymology.—The French or Franks language came at length to be called the Romaunt tongue, as often as the proper name.

Soph.

Soph. I am of the ſame opinion, and am told that Romances may be traced in France as high as the eleventh Century.

Euph. Unleſs I am miſtaken they may be traced much higher.—I muſt read you ſome more extracts before I give you a liſt of them.

Hort. Your extracts lay heavy upon me. Pray give us your own ſentiments and your own obſervations?

Euph. You will have much more reaſon to complain when I lay them aſide; which I ſhall do ſhortly, and turn into another road. I ſhall make no farther mention of the metrical Romances, than is neceſſary to carry us forward to the proſe ones.——When they were become popular in France, Spain, Italy, and ſome part of Germany, Britain was not unacquainted with them; as witneſs—another extract from Dr. *Percy*—"The ſtories "of King Authur and his round table, may "reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be the growth "of this Iſland. The ſtories of *Guy* of War-"wick, and *Bevis* of Southampton, and "others of the ſame kind, were probably

"the

" the invention of the Engliſh minſtrels.—
" The Welch have ſome very old Romances
" on the ſubject of King Authur, but as theſe
" are in proſe, they are not (probably) the
" firſt pieces compoſed on this ſubject."

Hort. I am extremely glad, for the honour of *Britain*, that ſhe had early a knowledge of this polite literature.

Euph. When you thought you were jeſting, you uttered a ſerious truth; this was indeed the *polite literature* of thoſe early ages.

Theſe old Hiſtorical ſongs, inſpired the enthuſiaſm of glory, however they may now be ridiculed.—It is recorded, that at the famous battle of Haſtings, the Normans animated their courage, by ſinging the old Romance, or ſong of *Rollo*.—Dr. *Percy* ſays, it was the ſong of *Roland*; but the former ſeems moſt likely, becauſe *Rollo* was their ancient chief, and their Prince traced his deſcent from him. —It is indiſputable that theſe ſongs, had a ſtrong effect upon the hearers;—but I ſhall have occaſion to enlarge upon this ſubject hereafter. I have ſaid more than I intended

on

on this head, in order to convince *Hortenſius* of the intimate connection between the Epic poetry, and the old Romance.—Pray obſerve that I am now ſpeaking of the *OLD* Romance, and not of the imitations of it that ſprung up many ages afterwards. They are frequently confounded together, and from thence have ariſen the erroneous opinions that have been formed of them. I am now ſpeaking of the old Romances of Religion and Chivalry, in which there was a ſtrange mixture of Paganiſm and Chriſtianity; which was farther promoted by two Monkiſh writers of thoſe times; one of which under the fictitious name of *Turpinus* Archbiſhop of Rheims, wrote a kind of Hiſtory of *Charlemagne*, and his twelve peers or Paladins, who drove the Saracens out of France;—the other our *Geoffery* of Monmouth. From the firſt of theſe *Arioſto* compoſed, or rather compiled his *Orlando Furioſo*, and *Taſſo* took the hint of his *Jeruſalem*.—Dr. *Percy* ſays on this head—"Should the "public encourage the revival of the an-"cient ſongs of Chivalry, they would fre-"quently

" quently ſee the rich ore of an *Arioſto* or " *Taſſo*, though buried under the rubbiſh and " droſs of thoſe barbarous times."

Hort. I confeſs that you have opened to me a new vein of learning, which I never before thought worth the trouble of enquiring after.

Euph. The confeſſion is ingenuous.—I ſtill refer you to Dr. *Percy*, though I ſhall read no more extracts from him.

I preſume you are by this time convinced, that the Romance and Epic poem are nearly related.—Dr. *Percy* has given us a liſt of the remains of the metrical Romances;—at our next meeting I will give you mine of proſe ones. For this time I take my leave of you. I ſhall expect you at my houſe next Thurſday.

Hort. & *Sophron.* We will not fail you.

EVENING

EVENING IV.

Sophronia, Hortenſius, Euphraſia.

Hort. I AM impatient to hear the further progreſs of Romance. We have paſſed through one department, which has afforded me both information and entertainment, and I expect ſtill more from the ſucceeding part.

Euph. I am obliged to your candour and attention, and ſhall endeavour to merit your indulgence, and the patience with which you have liſtened to the drieſt part of our progreſs; I hope we ſhall find more entertainment as we go forward.

I ſhall now give you my liſt of the moſt eminent Romances of the *middle ages*, with as

as many of the dates of the publication, as I have been able to procure.

I do not pretend to give a regular liſt of them, but only to note ſome of the moſt celebrated ones, and to mark the diſtinction between the *Old Romance*, thoſe of the middle ages, and thoſe of the laſt diviſion neareſt our own times; when the paſſion for theſe kind of writings was revived in France, in the ſeventeenth Century. Our own country has produced many, and as early as any in Europe, the Spaniards excepted, who received them from the Moors and Arabians, long before they were known in France or England.—I am now ſpeaking of the Romances of Chivalry properly ſo called.

Geoffery of Monmouth's Hiſtory gave birth to moſt of thoſe Romances, which are founded on Engliſh ſtories.

The Romance of *Hornechild* or King *Horne*, is one of the oldeſt, and is of the metrical kind.—I know not the date.

Sir *Lancelot du Lake*.

Sir *Guy* of Warwick.

The

The Hiſtory of King *Arthur* and his Knights of the round table.

Sir *Bevys* of Hampton—*Bevis* of Southampton.

Sir *Degorye*—Sir *Triſtram*—Sir *Perceval.*

All theſe are extant in metre, and many of them in proſe.

Guy Earl of Warwick, Proſe,		1292
Richard Cœur de Lyon,	—	1247
Hiſtoria Alexandria Regis,		1245
Deſtruction of Troy,	—	1380

There is good reaſon to believe that Romances were written in Normandy, long before the time of the Troubadours in Provence.

You will obſerve that many of the French Romances are founded upon Engliſh ſtories, —for inſtance,

Le Mort d'Authure,	——	1158
Triſtan Chevalier de la table Ronde,		1150
Le Brut d'Angleterre,	—	1155
Richard Cœur de Lyon,	—	1360
Sir Beuves de Hamton,		

Hort. It ſeems to me that you frequently mention Hiſtories of real perſons, among the heroes of Romance.

Euph.

Euph. You are right,—the early Romances were often taken from proſe Hiſtories; moſt of thoſe laſt mentioned were, and it is worthy your obſervation, that they have been tranſlated and tranſcribed from proſe to verſe, and *vice verſa:* ſo that the ſame ſtories have appeared, and are ſtill extant in both forms.—I will mention a few more French Romances, before I take notice of thoſe of Spain.

Hiſtoire de Quatre fils d'Aymon, 1156
Le Roman de Rois, —— 1160
Sir Eglamour d'Artois,
Hiſtoire d'Ippomedon.
Triſtan Prince de Lyonnois, 1445
Loves, &c. of the Greek Princes, 1360
Le Chevalier de la Cigne, — 1435
Roman de Rou.
Hiſtoire de Sangraal.
Le Romaunt de la Roſe, —— 1409

Hort. I have heard ſomething of the laſt mentioned, but all the others are ſtrangers to me.

Euph. We will ſpeak further of it hereafter,—at preſent we will take notice of ſome of the

the moſt celebrated of the Spaniſh Romances.

Amadis de Gaul in 24 parts written in the thirteenth Century.

From this famous Romance ſprung many imitations. Such as *Amadis* of Greece,—*Palmerin d'Oliva*,—*Palmerin* of England,—*Belianis* of Greece,—and many others, for which I refer you to Don *Quixote*'s library, as we are not likely to meet with them any where elſe.—I ſhall only obſerve that when the art of printing became eſtabliſhed in England, moſt of the old Romances were re-publiſhed that had ſlept many years.—For inſtance, *Recuyel d'Hiſtoire de Troy*, by *Caxton*, 1470,—*Mort Arthure* by the ſame,—and many others that I need not mention a ſecond time. There were alſo ſome modern Greek Romances,—as *Chæreas & Callirhoe*,—and *Chariton*,—in the 14th Century.

Hort. Upon my word, and a formidable collection! are any of them now extant?

Euph. I believe all, but moſt of them certainly are.—I will read you an article or two, from a Bookſeller's Catalogue, 1777.

Triſtan,

Triſtan Chevalier de la table Ronde—belle exemp.—avec figures & vignettes—. leg. rel.— 1548.—Price 1l. 11s. 6d.

Le Romaunt de la Roſe, ou tout l'Art d'Amore et encloſe :—Mſs.—ecrire ſur velin, en lettres Gothique, avec la Capitals illumine, en de plus belle preſervation.—ſur le dernier fuillé eſt cette remarque. " Johan Anquetin, Bailif, a " preſent Count de Harcourt, fait deviſé et " ecrire cette Romaunt de la Roſe, par Johan " Selles, Clerc."—Accomplir en l'Ann de Incarnation, 1409—Price 1l. 11s. 6d.

Hort. Very curious indeed,—and the price ſhews its eſtimation.

Euph. Another edition of the ſame work *printed* —— —— 1541

Another, at Amſterdam, 1735

Soph. I have heard much of the Romance of the Roſe, and I wiſh to know more particulars of it.

Hort. Euphraſia ſmiles, I fancy ſhe could give us ſome.

Euph. I believe I can, but it will interrupt our progreſs ; when I have finiſhed my liſt, I will tell you all that I know of it.

Soph.

Soph. You cannot oblige us more.

Euph. I find myſelf obliged to mention many of theſe works, which were of early invention; according to the date of their *tranſlation*;—as, *Romaunt de la Chevalieres de Gloire*,—*Paris*, 1612.—The Caſtle of Love, a Spaniſh Romance.—Tranſlated into Engliſh by *John Bourchier* (Lord *Berners*); who alſo tranſlated many other Romances from the French, Spaniſh, and Italian, particularly, The Hiſtory of the noble and valyant Knight, Sir *Arthur* of Lytell Britain, (Armorica).—The famous exploits of Sir *Hugh* of Bourdeaux.—This nobleman died in the year 1532.

Soph. A proof that Romances were early known here:—but you ſeem to have finiſhed your liſt.

Euph. I underſtand you, and will now fulfil my promiſe.—The Romance of the Roſe, is, properly ſpeaking, a courſe of Love-philoſophy,—it was begun by *William de Lorris*, who undertook it to pleaſe a Lady with whom he was enamoured,—he died in 1260, leaving it unfiniſhed.—Forty years after; one *John de Meun*,

Meun, who was alſo called *le Clopinell*, wrote a continuation of it; he was a Dominican, and a Doctor of Divinity.

Soph. He was not like the Greek Biſhop, ordered to burn his work?

Euph. Times and manners were changed; Prieſts wrote Romances, and Princes read them.—This *John de Meun* dedicated another Romance of his, to King *Philip le Bel*, in which he mentions his former work, as a recommendation of his new one.

"I *John de Meun*, who formerly upon jea-
"louſy, putting *Belacoil* into priſon, taught
"how to take the Caſtell, and gather the
"Roſe, &c."—Many of the French writers extol this Romance very highly, and prefer it to all the works of the Italian Poets; but it is cuſtomary with them, to depreciate the writers of other countries, and to magnify their own. As another proof of the affinity of metrical and proſe Romances, this famous one was tranſlated into Proſe, in the year 1480, by *Johan de Moulinet*, who is ſaid to have enriched it with many Allegories of his own

own invention. It afterwards underwent ſeveral further alterations, from the different hands it paſſed through; but ſtill the ground work was the ſame, and it ſtill preſerved its eſtimation.

Hort. Pray was it ever tranſlated into Engliſh?

Euph. It was begun by *Chaucer*, but left unfiniſhed at his death. I can give you a ſpecimen of this work, if you wiſh to hear it.

Soph. By all means:—Let us hear it.

Extract from CHAUCER.

Menne ſaine that in ſwevenings *,
There nis but ſables and leſings,
But menne may know, ſome ſwevens ſent,
And afterwards been appaurent;
This I ſhall draw unto warraunt.

Within my twenty year of age
When that love taketh his courage
Of youngé folke, I wente ſoone;
To bedde as I was wonte to doone;
And faſt I ſlepte, and in ſleeping,
Me mette with ſuch a ſwevening,
That liked me wondrous wele,
And in this ſweven is never a dele,

* Dreams.

That it nis afterwards befal,
Like as this dreme will tell us all.

Now this dreme will I rhime aright
To make your herts both gay and light,
For Love he praieth, and alſo
Commaundeth me that it be ſo.

Now if there be any aſke of me
Whether it be he or ſhe,
How this book that I read you here
Shall hight? that I will now declare.
It is THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE,
In which all the art of Love I cloſe.

The matter fair is of to make,
God graunt me in greé that ſhe it take
For whom that in begonnen is,
And that is ſhe that hath I wis
Such mokell priſe, and thereto ſhe
So worthy is beloved to be,
That ſhe well ought of priſe and right,
Be 'cleped Roſe of every wight.

Euph. I reckoned that by this time, I have tired you ſufficiently.

Soph. Not me I am ſure, you have ſatisfied my curioſity.

Hort. Nor me.—I find this account both curious and entertaining, and we are obliged for the communication.

Euph.

Euph. I hope by this time *Hortenſius* is convinced, that Romances, have been written, both in proſe and verſe; and further that a Romance, is nothing but an Epic in proſe.

Hort. I give up the point,—but I reſerve the liberty of making the proper diſtinction between the claſſic Poets, and Romance writers.

Euph. We will ſpeak further on that head hereafter,—at preſent, I have ſtill a more arduous undertaking to ſupport, namely, that theſe writings were by no means ſo contemptible, as they have been repreſented by later writers:—by thoſe who never ſaw them, nor knew any particulars of them; but have condemned them indiſcriminately, through blind prejudice; or what is worſe, total ignorance of them.

Hort. I take ſhame to myſelf, and ſhall remain ſilent on this head.

Euph. In early times, in the dawning of literature, theſe ſubjects exerciſed the pens of the ingenious—they were the favourite ſtudies of the young nobility and gentry of thoſe

times, and their manners were, in a great meaſure, formed upon the models of thoſe adventurers, whoſe exploits they continually heard recited. The effects they produced were indeed of ſo mixed a nature, that it is difficult to ſeparate the good from the bad. Religion and virtue, were ſo blended with fanaticiſm and abſurdity, that the luſtre of the former principles, concealed the blemiſhes of the latter.—At this diſtance of time we need not be afraid to give our judgment of them, neither ought we to be aſhamed to do juſtice to works of Genius, by whatever name they are called.

Hort. Certainly.—I ſhall pay them due reſpect for your ſake.

Euph. Not ſo, *Hortenſius*, I will not accept ſuch reſpect for them.—You ſhall pay it for the ſake of thoſe illuſtrious men, who imbibed their enthuſiaſm, and carried it into practice.

Theſe were the books that cauſed ſuch a ſpirit of Chivalry in the youth of much later times, particularly in Spain; ſuch as raiſed up

up a *Cervantes* to attack them; and you will find a curious liſt of them, in the ſixth chapter of the firſt book of Don *Quixote*, in the converſation between the Prieſt and the Barber; in which the Author condemns moſt of them to the flames.

Hort. Is it poſſible to reſpect that incomparable work, and yet reſpect the books it condemns and ridicules?

Euph. Yes it is; though it may ſeem at firſt view a paradox.—The infatuation was ſo general, that the brighteſt geniuſes, and the wiſeſt men were not exempt from it. —Our Poetry owes more to it, than you imagine; it was calculated to elevate and warm a poetic imagination, of this I ſhall bring proofs. *Chaucer*, and all our old writers, abound with it,—*Spencer* owes perhaps his immortality to it, it is the Gothic imagery, that gives the principal graces to his work, and without them we ſhould ſoon grow tired of his Allegories,—but we have a yet ſtronger inſtance in our divine *Milton*, whoſe mind was ſo deeply impreſſed by them, and his imagination ſo warmed,

warmed, that he frequently recurs to them, of which I ſhall only give you a few ſpecimens.——

> Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled ſince
> Of Fairy damſels met in foreſt wide
> By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
> *Lancelot*, or *Pelleas*, or *Pellenore*. PAR. REG. b. 2.

And again in the following book.——

> When *Agrican* with all his northern powers
> Beſieged *Albracca*, *as Romances tell*,
> The city of Galliphrone;—from thence to win
> The faireſt of her ſex *Angelica*
> His daughter; ſought by many proweſt knights,
> Both *Paynim*, and the peers of *Charlemagne*.

There are continual alluſions of this kind, ſprinkled through all his works; but theſe may ſerve as proofs of what I have advanced.

Hort. You find means to authenticate whatever you advance.

Soph. Give me leave to furniſh you with another paſſage, from memory, it is in the Penſeroſo.——

> Or call up him that left half told
> The ſtory of *Cambuſcan* bold,
> Of *Camball*, and of *Algarſife*,
> And who had *Canacé* to wife,

That

That own'd the virtuous ring and glaſs;
And of the wondrous horſe of braſs
On which the Tartar king did ride:
And if ought elſe great bards beſide
In ſage and ſolemn tunes have ſung
Of turneys and of trophies hung,
Of foreſts and enchantments dreat
Where more is meant than meets the ear.

Euph. I am much obliged to you, this paſſage helps to illuſtrate our ſubject.—I will only juſt obſerve that the ſtory *of Canacé* is finiſhed by *Spencer* in the Fairy Queen, Book 4th, where he begins the ſtory with a fine Apoſtrophe to *Chaucer*'s memory.

Hort. There is a kind of enthuſiaſm, that is inſpired by theſe Poets, which ſeizes the head, and engages the heart, in their favour. —I have heard it obſerved that *Spenſer* has made more poets than any other writer of our country.

Soph. I know one inſtance of it myſelf, in a lady, who never before dreamed of writing Poetry, ſhe was not young at the time when ſhe firſt met with *Spenſer*; and reading ſome of the fineſt Cantos in it, the impreſſion was ſo

ſo ſtrong, that ſhe could not ſleep all the night after, and before the morning, ſhe compoſed a very pretty piece of Poetry in honour of *Spencer*,—and from that time forward ſhe continued to write whenever a ſubject fell in her way, and all her writings are above mediocrity.

Euph. I can confirm this truth, and that ſhe wrote verſes when ſhe was turned of ſeventy years of age.

Hort. My dear Ladies, you are enough to frighten one, I ſhall be afraid to take up one of theſe books, leſt it ſhould work ſuch a miracle upon me:—but are we not wandering from our ſubject?

Soph. I beg your pardon, it is I that have led you aſtray.

Euph. Not ſo far as *Hortenſius* ſeems to think, for *Spencer*'s poem may be called of the Romance kind.—He will allow that there muſt have been ſomething engaging and faſcinating in thoſe books that captivated the hearts of men, who were in other reſpects of ſound minds and regular conduct:—for ought we

we to think that all who read and admired thoſe books were fools or madmen?

Hort. According to your account, we muſt reckon all the moſt accompliſhed men of thoſe times in the number if we do.

Euph. In the days of Gothic ignorance, theſe Romances might, perhaps, be read by many young perſons as true Hiſtories, and might therefore more eaſily affect their manners.—As in the Heathen Mythology, the example of a mortal exalted into a demi-god, was an incitement to the imitation of actions ſo gloriouſly rewarded;—ſo the examples of the Heroes of Romance and Epic poetry, might have excited the youth of thoſe times, to copy exploits univerſally rewarded by praiſe and admiration.

Hort. It is neither incredible nor improbable that they might do ſo; and you have well explained the Paradox, I took notice of.

Euph. This infatuation ſpread through France, Italy, Germany, and England; but more remarkably in Spain, where the young nobility were ſo deeply infected by it, that it

called forth the pen of a *Cervantes*; who by ridiculing Romance and Knight Errantry in his Don *Quixote*, in ſome degree checked this frenzy: but the effect of his ridicule was not ſo univerſal as is generally believed.

Hort. Are you going to maintain another Paradox?

Euph. Not at all—I am only ſpeaking a well known truth, and I ſhall only appeal to Dr. *Percy*.—"The Satire of *Cervantes*, or, "*rather* the increaſe of knowledge and lite-"rature, drove theſe books off the ſtage."

Hort. Now you are coming upon us, with your extracts again.

Euph. Not ſo.—I ſhall endeavour for once to ſtand my ground alone.—The paſſion for theſe books was in ſome degree checked; but it was not eradicated.—There is good reaſon to believe, that even *Cervantes* himſelf, was not cured of it.

Hort. Nay, if you animadvert upon *Cervantes*, I know not what to ſay: but I ſhall expect proofs of this aſſertion.

Euph. I ſhall produce them preſently.—

Beſides

Beſides his *Galatea;* (of which he ſpeaks with pleaſure, and reſcues it from the condemned books in Don *Quixote's* library, and after he had written his Novels upon a new plan,) he compoſed a ſerious Romance, called *Perſiles* and *Sigiſmonda*, which remains extant, as a proof againſt him. It is ſaid that he preferred this to all his other works:—he compares it with the Æthiopics of *Heliodorus*, being written in the ſame ſtyle and manner. What ſhall we ſay of the man, who had produced Don *Quixote*, and could afterwards write a book of the ſame kind as thoſe he ſatirized? May we not conclude that he ſtill loved them in his heart?

Hort. Permit me to offer a reaſon on his behalf,—a reaſon that makes me ſigh over the fate of Genius.—*Cervantes!* the gallant ſoldier!—the delightful companion!—the charming writer!—the pride and boaſt of his country!—*Cervantes* wanted bread:—he wrote this celebrated work in a priſon, and knowing the taſte and humour of his countrymen, compoſed ſuch a book, as was moſt likely to pleaſe them, and procure relief to his miſeries.

Euph.

Euph. Your apology is generous and liberal, and you have given us, probably, the true reaſon.—I join with you in admiring and deploring the fate of that incomparable man, and in him of neglected Genius.—I am now going, as you will think, to maintain another Paradox; to affirm that the paſſion for the *Old Romance*, ſtill exiſts in ſome countries:—particularly, in Spain and Italy.

Hort. How will you bring proofs of this point?

Euph. By appealing to the veracity of our friend *Horatio*, whom you knew a man to be believed. *Horatio* reſided twenty years in Italy, and was a cloſe obſerver of the manners of the place where he reſided.—He told me that in the city of Naples, (and many other places) there are a ſet of people who earn their bread by reciting old ſtories, that they are ſurrounded by a ſet of auditors who give them ſmall money.—They put one in mind of the old bards, except that they recite ſometimes in proſe, as well as in verſe,—they recite in a kind of tone between ſpeaking

ing and ſinging, ſometimes like the Opera recitative,—they are frequently ſent for to attend the ſick, whom they lull to ſleep by their chantings,—ſometimes they recite from their invention, but oftner from their memory,—ſometimes ſtanzas of *Arioſto* and *Taſſo*;—ſometimes from the old Romances;—at others the legendary ſtories of the ſaints of the Romiſh church, but they are much followed, and moſt people are pleaſed with their recitals, and they are very popular.

Soph. I have heard that there are ſtill itinerant bards in Italy and Spain.

Euph. You are not miſinformed. *Horatio* has heard two of them contend in alternate verſe, and with all the warmth and enthuſiaſm of the ancient Poets.—Neither the ſpirit of Poetry or Romance, is totally extinct, in many parts of Italy and Spain.

Hort. Whenever I think to catch you tripping, you glide away from me, and in your place I find another perſon, whom I am to contend with.

Euph. I only fortify my opinions, by others more reſpectable.

Hort.

Hort. You fight flying like a Parthian, but I will confeſs freely that you have given me a much higher opinion of theſe old Romances, and of thoſe who read them. But what then are thoſe of which I had formed ſo contemptible an opinion?

Euph. Ah *Hortenſius!*—have I not caught you tripping?—Have you ſuffered yourſelf to form a contemptible opinion of books you never knew nor enquired after?

Hort. If I have taken up an opinion upon truſt, it was from the character that has been given me of thoſe books, by perſons of acknowledged abilities and judgment.

Euph. Then do not part with it till you ſee good reaſon for it, perhaps your friends may have given you a true repreſentation; there are many paltry Romances, and but few capital ones.—But I ſhall come nearer to you at our next meeting, when I am to ſpeak of yet a third claſs, which I ſhall call *modern Romances*, and indeed they are ſo comparatively; I mean thoſe of the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth Centuries, we will now take our leave of the *OLD* Romances.

Hort.

Hort. Thus far you have gone forward ſucceſsfully, and I am much obliged for your communications.

Euph. And I to you for your patience, which I ſhall put to further trial.

Soph. Pray baniſh that idea, leſt it ſhould lead you to ſuppreſs or abridge any thing.—Next Thurſday we meet at my houſe.

Hort. I ſhall attend you with increaſed ſatisfaction.

Euph. Good night to my kind and partial friends.

EVENING V.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Euph. WE are now to proceed to the modern Romances which have been ſo often miſtaken for the old ones.—After theſe had been exploded in a great meaſure, the taſte for them was revived in France, by *Calprenede*,—*D'Urſé*,—the *Scudery's*, and many others; who wrote new Romances upon a different plan: which in ſome kinds of refinement were ſuperior to the old ones, but in the greater merits fell very ſhort of them. They were written with more regularity, and brought nearer to probability; but on the other hand by taking for their foundation ſome obſcure parts

parts of true hiſtory, and building fictitious ſtories upon them, truth and fiction were ſo blended together, that a common reader could not diſtinguiſh them, young people eſpecially imbibed ſuch abſurd ideas of hiſtorical facts and perſons, as were very difficult to be rectified.—Why does *Sophronia* ſmile at my remark?

Soph. Becauſe it reminds me of a circumſtance, that confirms the truth of your obſervation.—A ſiſter of mine was upon a viſit in the country.—She ſlept with a lady who was a viſitor at the ſame houſe.—The room was hung with fine old Tapeſtry, repreſenting the hiſtory of *Alexander* the Great.—The ſtranger lady aſked the ſtory, and my ſiſter pointed out the tent of *Darius* as the capital piece.—Pray ſaid the ſtranger, which of thoſe ladies is *Caſſandra?*—my ſiſter was ſurprized and at a loſs for an anſwer.—I don't know, ſaid ſhe, that any perſon of that name is there.—Oh, ſaid the lady, I mean *Statira*; ſhe is ſometimes called by that name, and ſometimes by the other.—My ſiſter was confounded to diſcover how ignorant ſhe was of *Statira*'s hiſtory, and

ſaid

ſaid no more.—At her return home ſhe told me of this incident, I was at no loſs to underſtand it.—I told her that *Statira* many Centuries after her death, had been revived by a certain French writer, and made the ſubject of a long Romance, under the name of *Caſſandra*.

Euph. Your ſtory illuſtrates my obſervation, and proves the impropriety of putting theſe books into the hands of young people, though in other reſpects they are a very harmleſs kind of reading.

Soph. I have heard that theſe books produced a particular kind of affectation in ſpeaking and writing, which is ſtill called the Romantic.

Euph. That is very probable,—but as faſhion has too great a ſhare in regulating the language of the times, that could not laſt very long.

Soph. I beg your pardon.—Faſhion did not then change ſo often as now.

Euph. I believe there has always been nearly the ſame proportion of faſhionable folly in civilized countries; the only difference

ence is, that within the preſent Century it has made a much quicker rotation. To trace the cauſes of this would lead us too far from our preſent ſubject.—When people talk in an affected manner, and ſtill more when they utter improbabilities, it may without impropriety be called Romantic, at any time.

Hort. You, ladies, may ſettle this point at any other time.—I beg you, Madam, to proceed to your modern Romances.

Euph. The ancient and modern Romance, had each their peculiar *ton*, their *affectation*, their *abſurdities*:—at the ſame time it muſt be confeſſed by thoſe who deſpiſe them, that the enthuſiaſm they inſpired was that of virtue and honour.

Soph. That is indiſputable.—I have read many of theſe you are now ſpeaking of, and I can bear my teſtimony that they inculcated no principles contrary to any of the moral or ſocial virtues.

Euph. You ſay true.—If it taught young women to deport themſelves too much like Queens and Princeſſes, it taught them at the ſame

ſame time that virtue only could give luſtre to every rank and degree.—It taught the young men to look upon themſelves as the champions and protectors of the weaker ſex;—to treat the object of their paſſion with the utmoſt reſpect;—to avoid all improper familiarities, and, in ſhort, to expect from her the reward of their virtues.

Hort. Upon my word, ladies, you have ſaid more in behalf of theſe books, than you have againſt them; and with every appearance of reaſon.

Euph. I am glad you think ſo, and begin to hope we ſhall agree in opinion ſtill better, as we advance farther.

Such as I have deſcribed them, are the French Romances.—The *Aſtrea* of *D'Urſé*,—*Cyrus* and *Clelia* by *Meſdemoiſelles Scudery*,—*Caſſandra* and *Cleopatra* by *Calprenede*,—*Ariane*,—*Almahide*,—*Polexander*,—*Ibrahim*,—*Francion*,—and many others of the ſame kind.—Theſe were the books that pleaſed our grandmothers, whoſe patience in wading thro' ſuch tremendous volumes, may raiſe our ſurprize:

prize: for to us they appear dull,—heavy,—and unintereſting.

Soph. You remind me of what my good Aunts have often told me, that they, my Mother, and a ſelect party of relations and friends, uſed to meet once a week at each other's houſes, to hear theſe ſtories;—one uſed to read, while the reſt ply'd their needles.

Hort. Such an aſſembly would excite a ſmile in the ladies of this enlightened age, who know how to employ their time ſo much better.

Soph. Spare your reflections *Hortenſius.*—I preſume to think theſe meetings were quite as innocent, though perhaps in ſome reſpects not ſo *improving*, as the *Coteries*, and *Card-aſſemblies* of our days.

Euph. I am entirely of your opinion, my friend; and I believe *Hortenſius* meant a reflection upon the preſent age, rather than the paſt.

Hort. I preſume not to decide a point of ſo much conſequence.—The ladies of the preſent age, have the advantages of a more liberal

liberal education, whether they make a better uſe of them, depends on themſelves.

Euph. I believe they have not the patience of their anceſtors, in reading ſuch tedious ſtories, and that moſt of them would ſubmit to any penance to avoid it. Theſe books are now become the lumber of a bookſeller's ſhop, and are frequently ſeen to wrap a pound of ſugar from the grocer's. I have dip'd into them, in order to qualify myſelf to ſpeak of their merits and defects; and I declare that nothing but a priſon, and no other companion, could induce me to read one of them through.

Hart. Are not theſe the books that I have heard deſpiſed ſo much?

Euph. I believe they are: — yet among loads of traſh, we may ſelect ſome works of Genius, that deſerve to be celebrated, and tranſmitted to poſterity.

——" that which we call a Roſe,
By any other name would ſmell as ſweet. SHAKESP.

I aſk your permiſſion to read another ſhort extract from Dr. *Percy?*

Hort.

Hort. Your humble ſervant Madam,—pray read what you pleaſe.

Euph. "The firſt proſe Romances that "appeared in our language were printed by "*Caxton*, (at leaſt that I have been able to diſ-"cover,) and theſe were tranſlations from "the French:—Whereas Romances had long "been current in metre, and read in *Chau-"cer*'s time."

Hort. They ſhall be proſe or verſe, for any oppoſition from me.

Euph. In the beginning of Queen *Eliza-beth*'s reign theſe books began to be much read, and towards the end of it, Romances were written in our language.—One of the earlieſt and moſt famous that I know of, is *Euphues*, or the Anatomy of Wit, by *John Lilly*, who attempted to reform and purify the Engliſh language, by purging it of obſo-lete and uncouth expreſſions. Mr. *Blount* who publiſhed *Lilly*'s plays, ſpeaks of this work in his Preface. "Our nation is obliged "to *Lilly* for a new kind of Engliſh which "he taught it,—all our ladies were his "ſcholars;

" ſcholars; and that beauty at Court that " could not *parlèz Euphuiſme*;—that could " not converſe in his language,—was as lit- " tle regarded as ſhe who now ſpeaks not " French."

Other writers ſpeak very differently of this work. One calls it an affected Jargon, in which the perpetual uſe of metaphors, alluſions and allegories, paſs for wit, and ſtiff bombaſt for fine language; that the court of *Elizabeth* was miſerably infected by it, which helped to let in the vile pedantry that was predominant in the following reign. This diverſity of opinions induced me to purchaſe the book, which by good fortune, I met with ſoon after.

Hort. You will then give us your own opinion of it?

Euph. I eſteem it as a great curioſity.—The language exceeded my expectation, but there is a certain quaintneſs and peculiarity, that would not be borne with at this time; yet we ſhould always conſider it as written in the dawning of our language, and as a ſtep to the improvement of it, which ſoon after ſhone out with

with great luſtre under *Shakeſpeare*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnſon*.

Hort. I ſhould like to ſee this book.

Euph. I am afraid you are not a ſufficient adept in Romance, to have any reliſh for it.—It is printed in the black letter—"The "firſt part is called *Euphues* or the Anato- "my of Wit.—Very pleaſant for all Gen- "tlemen to reade, and moſt neceſſary to re- "member; wherein is contained the delights "that Wit followeth in his Youth, by the "pleaſantneſs of Love, and the happineſſe he "reapeth in age, by the perfectneſſe of Wiſ- "dom.—Printed 1620.

"The ſecond Part is entitled *Euphues* and "his England, containing his Voyage and "Adventures.—Printed in 1623, and Dedi- "cated to *Edward Vere*, Earl of Oxenford, "Great Chamberlain of England."

Soph. I ſhall not be ſatisfied with this account.—I muſt read it.

Euph. Whenever you pleaſe.—The next work of this kind I ſhall mention is, *Partheniſſa*, a Romance, by *Roger Boyle*, Earl of

Orrery,—in three volumes folio. Printed 1664.

Hort. Mercy on us!—three Volumes in Folio!

Euph. Yea, and here follows a remark upon it, by Mr. *Walpole*, from his Royal and Noble Authors.——

"The Earl's Biographer ſays, that this per-
"formance has not been much read, becauſe
"it never was compleated; as if three Vo-
"lumes in Folio wou'd not content the moſt
"heroic appetite that ever exiſted."

Hort. Truly I am of his opinion. I ſuppoſe it was the faſhion both to write, and to read theſe voluminous works, at that time.

Euph. I believe it was.—That eternal ſcribbler the Ducheſs of Newcaſtle wrote many ſtories of the ſame kind, which were publiſhed in 1665, in one volume folio, called—*Nature's Pictures drawn by Fancy to the Life.*

Hort. Thank heaven, it is not the faſhion to read ſuch long works now!

Euph. You may always throw aſide your book, when you are tired. The wits of theſe days have more ſqueamiſh appetites, and the writers

writers of both times ſtudied the taſte of their readers.

Let us return to our ſubject.—The next work of merit I ſhall mention, is Sir *Philip Sidney*'s Arcadia, which has been highly celebrated, by his contemporaries; and indeed by many later writers. This Romance is of a mixed kind, partaking of the heroic manners of the old Romance, and the ſimplicity of paſtoral life.

Hort. This book has been excepted from the general cenſure paſſed upon others of the ſame claſs. The Author was reckoned one of the firſt characters of his age,—or rather the Phœnix of it.

Euph. After what you have ſaid, I ſhall not attempt the character of this celebrated work:—but I will read you an extract from Mr. *Walpole*'s catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors.——

"No man ſeems to me ſo aſtoniſhing an "object of temporary admiration as Sir *Phi-*"*lip Sidney.* The learned of Europe dedi-"cated their works to him, the republic of "Poland thought him worthy to be in no-

" mination for their crown.—All the Muſes
" of England wept for his death.—When we
" at this diſtance enquire what prodigious
" merits excited ſuch admiration,—what do
" we find?—Great valour.—But it was an
" age of heroes. In full of all other talents,
" we have a tedious, lamentable, pedantic,
" Paſtoral romance, which the patience of a
" young virgin in love, cannot now wade
" through: and ſome abſurd attempts to
" fetter Engliſh verſe in Roman chains; a
" proof that this applauded author under-
" ſtood little of the genius of his own lan-
" guage.—The few of his letters extant are
" poor matters. By far the beſt preſumption
" of his abilities as a writer, is a pamphlet,
" which is an anſwer to *Leiceſter*'s Common-
" wealth.—It defends his uncle with great
" ſpirit:—he died with the raſhneſs of a vo-
" lunteer, after having lived to write with
" the *ſang froid*, and prolixity of *Mademoi-
" ſelle de Scuderi.*"

Hort. I think the character of Sir *Philip Sidney*, too much degraded here.

Euph.

Euph. In juſtice to the writer, I muſt give you the note that follows.——

" I have been blamed (ſays Mr. *Walpole*,) " for not mentioning Sir *Philip*'s defence of " poetry, which ſome think his beſt work,— " all that my criticiſms pretended to ſay, was, " that I could not conceive how a man who " in ſome reſpects had written dully and weak- " ly, and who at beſt was far inferior to our " beſt Authors, had obtained ſuch immenſe " reputation.—Let his merits, and his fame " be weighed together, and then let it be de- " termined whether the world has overvalu- " ed, or I have undervalued the character of " Sir *Philip Sidney*."

Hort. Truly I think he has undervalued it. His credit as a writer, out of the queſtion; there will remain qualities enough, to juſtify the reſpect paid to Sir *Philip*, by his contemporaries.

Euph. You will recollect that his merits as a *writer*, was the point that fell under Mr. *Walpole*'s conſideration, and alſo that it is a *man* who is the author of this critique.

Hort.

Hort. I underſtand you :—but has a *woman* nothing to ſay in defence of a work that has always been a favourite with her ſex ?

Euph. Our ſex are certainly obliged to Sir *Philip*, who paid us great deference upon all occaſions. The Arcadia is addreſſed to his accompliſhed ſiſter the Counteſs of Pembroke, and is commonly called, Pembroke's Arcadia.

Hort. Still you are ſilent as to the merits of it.

Euph. Since you will oblige me to ſpeak out, I think it equal, but not ſuperior to any of the Romances of the ſame period. The proſe part of it, is much ſuperior to the poetry ; as will appear by comparing it with that of his contemporaries. *Spenſer*'s Shepherd's Calender is ſtill intelligible, and pleaſant: but *Sidney*'s Paſtorals, are dull and unintelligible, and are generally ſkipped over by thoſe who ſtill read and admire the Arcadia.

Soph. I confeſs that is exactly the caſe with me, who ſtill have the courage to declare I think it a very fine Romance.

Euph.

Euph. So do many others, and I do not ſee any reaſon why people ſhould be aſhamed to avow their taſte.—I have a few words more to add on this ſubject.—Sir *Philip Sidney* died in 1586. The date of my edition of the Arcadia is 1627:—but I ſhould ſuppoſe there muſt have been an earlier one.—In 1725, it underwent a kind of Tranſlation by Mrs. *Stanley*, by which it was thought to loſe more beauties than it gained.—It is now time for us to leave his works to their repoſe, upon the ſhelves of the learned, and the curious in old writings.

Soph. I ſhall come and awaken the Arcadia, in order to refreſh my memory. I lov'd this book in my youth, and ſhall not forſake it now.

Euph. My friend, what you ſay is one of the ſtrongeſt objections to books of this claſs. If read and liked early in life, they are apt to give a romantic turn to the reader's mind, unleſs ſhe has as much diſcretion as *Sophronia.*

Soph. I do not deſerve the compliment,—I had really the turn of mind you mention, till a little knowledge of the world, and my experience

experience in it, corrected the abſurd ideas I had conceived.

Euph. You are very ingenuous, and your confeſſion confirms my opinion.—The next work I ſhall introduce to you, is *Barclay's Argenis*, which you already know to be a favorite of mine.—It is doing it an injury to treat it as a mere Romance; for the ſtory is only a vehicle to convey to us, the genius and knowledge of the Author. A writer of the laſt Century thus ſpeaks of it.——

" The philoſophy and politics of *Barclay's* " *Argenis*, have made it worthy of the peru- " ſal of the greateſt ſtateſmen and ſcholars."

The name of Romance, even in our days, had prejudiced many people againſt it—you among the reſt *Hortenſius*.

Hort. I confeſs it. I thought you had employed your time to little purpoſe in reviving an old Romance; but on reading it, I was convinced that it was a work of real merit, and deſerved a better reception.

Euph. There are ſome Critics among us that ought to have informed themſelves better,

ter, before they preſumed to impoſe their opinions upon the public, which they have miſinformed, and put it out of their power to rectify the erroneous opinions they have occaſioned.

Hort. The Reviewers I preſume.—I remember there was ſomething ſaid, that I thought ill-natured, but I do not recollect the particulars.

Euph. I have in my hand an extract from the Critical Review of January 1772,—— "Notwithſtanding the pains taken in an Advertiſement to put off this Phœnix, for an Original work, we will venture to pronounce it a tranſlation of the *Argenis* of *Barclay*.—That a Lady may have given us a tranſlation of that compoſition is not impoſſible; but we rather imagine that an old tranſlation has been moderniſed.—The *Argenis* has been highly commended by ſeveral learned and ingenious men, but we own ourſelves to have no reliſh for the Romances of the laſt Century, we are ſufficiently ſatisfied with thoſe of the preſent." —What think you of this ſentence?

Hort. Arbitrary and deciſive; with an air of neglect and contempt, that is calculated to prejudice the public againſt it:—but pray had this mandate any effect upon the ſale of your publication?

Euph. Too much ſo, on the public in general:—but I have a circle of friends who cannot be biaſſed by theſe ſelf-elected cenſors of books.—If theſe doughty Critics, had read the *Preface only*, they would have been ſatisfied, that neither the *Editor*, nor the *Publiſher*, ever intended *to put off this Phœnix for an original work*; though by its being advertiſed with ſome other original publications, it gave a pretence to thoſe who look no farther than *advertiſements*, to put ſo unfair a conſtruction on it.

Hort. Very unfair dealing indeed.

Euph. Theſe ſagacious inquiſitors *ventured* to *pronounce* it the *Argenis* of *Barclay*,—amazing penetration, and equal diſcretion!—had they afforded ſo much of their precious time, as was neceſſary to read the *Preface* only, they would have known that the Editor was

was ſo far from deſiring to diſguiſe or conceal the truth, that ſhe took pleaſure and pride in acknowledging it; and, in ſhort they would have met with a full confutation of every point they advanced againſt her.

Soph. Their ſentence was both cruel and unjuſt, but I hope it recoiled upon themſelves.

Hort. It ſeems to me that they looked no farther than the Title-page, and gave their ſentence, by gueſſing at the contents of the book.

Euph. I have every reaſon to believe ſo:—but peace be to them and their labours, which if they were not well paid for, they would ſoon diſcontinue.—It is not in their power to add to, or take away from the reputation of *Barclay*'s *Argenis*, whatever it may have gained or loſt by any of its tranſlators or commentators.

Hort. But how did you come off from the reſt of the Inquiſitors?

Euph. The Monthly Reviewers were more liberal and candid,—they read the *Preface*, nay they commended it, and paid due reſpect

to

to the Original writer: but they objected to the politics, as local and temporary; and to the principles of government, as abſolute and arbitrary.—They took no notice that the high monarchical principles of *Barclay* were moderated by the Editor. I could alſo have wiſhed them to have caſt an eye upon the Poetry, which is no inconſiderable part of the work, nor, as I hope the worſt executed. I confeſs I was mortified to find they did not; for though I expected they would find ſomething to correct, I hoped they would likewiſe find ſomething to commend.—But I have ſaid too much upon this ſubject, and ſhall conclude with obſerving, it was the beſt book I ever gave the public, and the worſt received.

Hort. It is indiſputably a work of great merit:—but pray allow me to aſk a queſtion,—how came you to alter the Original title, and call it the Phœnix?

Euph. It was againſt my own judgment and remonſtrance.—The Publiſher adviſed, and even inſiſted upon a *new Title*, and I the rather

ther gave way to his demand, becauſe there was another Tranſlation offered to the preſs, and intended to be publiſhed at the ſame time; and I thought my friends would know mine by this diſtinction:—this was the private reaſons hinted at in the Preface, which was ridiculed by the Reviewers.

Soph. I have heard that your Tranſlation is conſiderably abridged.

Euph. It is ſo,—I wiſh it had been abridged as much more, and that I had only told the plain narrative, and omitted all the fine Eſſays, (the moſt valuable part of the work,) and the poetry alſo; it had ſaved me much time and labour, and would have pleaſed more readers.

Hort. But not ſuch readers, as *you* wiſh to pleaſe.

Euph. Thoſe are the beſt readers for an Author that buy the moſt books: but enough of this. I muſt obſerve that *J. Barclay* was of Scotiſh parentage, but born and educated in France, and that he was an accompliſhed gentleman. Thoſe who deſire to know more of him, muſt read his works;—which are, The *Argenis*,

Argenis, and *Euphormio*, a ſatirical work. You are now I truſt convinced of the affinity of Proſe, and metrical Romances.

Chaucer's Canterbury tales would tell equally well in verſe or proſe. His Knight's tale is a complete Epic, and in *Dryden*'s opinion very little inferior to the Iliad or the Æneis.—"The ſtory (ſays he) is more pleaſing, the "manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, "the learning as deep and various, and the "conduct as artful." Permit me to remark that *Dryden*'s elegant, rich, and harmonious numbers, have preſerved this, and many other of *Chaucer*'s works, from ſinking into oblivion, and he has given the old bard a ſhare of his own immortality.

Spenſer's *Faery Queen*, is confeſſedly a Romance verſified.

Fenelon's *Telemachus*, is an Epic in proſe. —The *Telemachus* is a work above all praiſe, and demands our notice here, as being a ſtory of the Heroic kind.

Ramſey's *Cyrus* is an excellent work, but it has more of the caſt of Hiſtory than of Romance.

mance. I mention both theſe charming books rather out of time, becauſe they are of a different ſpecies, from the modern ſtories or Novels.

Hort. And of more value than a million of them, though you have ſpoken ſo very briefly of them.

Euph. To praiſe them is to hold a candle to the Sun.

I ſhall now draw towards a concluſion of Romances properly ſo called.—I ſhall read you an extract, which is the concluſion of the converſation of the Canon and the Curate in the fourth book of Don *Quixote;* in the courſe of which, all the abſurdities of Romances have been expoſed and criticiſed.—"The ſubject of a Romance (ſays the Ca-"non) affords an ample field for a good Ge-"nius to diſplay itſelf.—He may weave a "web of ſuch various and beautiful texture, "that the perfection of it may attain to "the ultimate end of all writing, which is "to delight and inſtruct mankind; becauſe "this unconfined way of writing, gives an "Author room to ſhew his ſkill, in the Epic

"or

" or the Lyric way, in Tragedy or Comedy;
" with all the parts included in the ſweet and
" charming ſciences of Poetry and Oratory:"
—for the Epic may be written in *proſe*, as well as *verſe*.

Hort. You end, as you always do, with a clincher to your argument.

Euph. Let us then adjourn to next Thurſday.

Soph. We have ſufficiently fatigued you for this time, and we can never repay our obligations to you.

EVENING

EVENING VI.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Hort. WELL met, my friends,—I would not forego our weekly *Coterie*, for any route or aſſembly whatever.

Euph. You do us honour, and we will ſtrive to deſerve it.

Soph. The honour is all your own,—I diſclaim any ſhare of it.

Euph. I except it then as the reward of my labours; which I ſhall continue with the ſame, or increaſed aſſiduity.

Hortenſius, I now deſire to hear your objections, to any part of what I have advanced in our paſt converſations?

Hort.

Hort. Yes,—my objections to what has been ſaid by men of firſt-rate Genius, learning, and judgment. You have contrived ſo as to transfer your attack from yourſelf to thoſe, whom I dare not contradict.

Euph. If I have done it unfairly, I ſhall be ready to ſubmit.

Hort. No, I dare not ſay ſo, nor do I mean to oppoſe you;—on the contrary you have convinced me of ſome errors, and cured me of ſome prejudices. I confeſs I have not been converſant enough in this *Genus* of compoſition, as you have properly called it, to be a competent judge of the merits or defects of moſt of the works in it.—I come to you for further information, in purſuing the ſubject before us. You promiſed to proceed to your remarks on their effects upon the manners of their times reſpectively.

Soph. Will you permit me firſt to aſk a queſtion?

Euph. As many as you pleaſe, Madam.

Soph. I have been deſired to mention a certain book to you, and to aſk if you have read it, and whether it would not be of ſervice

vice in your preſent enquiry?—It is called, "*Traité de l'Origine de Romans, par Monſ.* "*Huet.*"

Euph. I have it in my own library.

Soph. And what is your opinion of it?

Euph. I will give it you in the words of *Shakeſpeare.*——

"His remarks are two grains of wheat in "two buſhels of chaff, you will ſearch for "them a whole day, and when you have "found them they are not worth your la-"bour."

Soph. Shall I tell the gentleman who deſired me to offer it to you, of this ſentence of yours, or *Shakeſpeare*'s?

Euph. Not ſo, I will put my anſwer into the mouth of a great Critic, whoſe ſentence will be as reſpectable, as it is deciſive.——

The ſupplement to the tranſlator's preface to *Jarvis*'s Don *Quixote*, is ſaid to be written by Biſhop *Warburton*, and would be no diſcredit to any writer. I ſhall read you the paſſage I referred to.——

"Monſ. *Huet* Biſhop of *Avranches*, who "wrote a formal treatiſe upon the Origin of

"Romances

" Romances, has ſaid little or nothing of
" them, in that *ſuperficial* work.—Having
" brought down the account of Romances
" to the later Greeks, and entered upon thoſe
" of the weſtern writers, which has now the
" name of Romances almoſt appropriated to
" them, he puts the change upon his readers,
" and inſtead of giving us an account of theſe
" books of Chivalry, he contents himſelf
" with a long account of the poems of the
" Provencal writers, which are called like-
" wiſe Romances :—and ſo, under the equi-
" voque of a common term, dops his pro-
" per ſubject, and entertains us with another,
" that had no relation to it more than in the
" name."

Hort. She comes upon us with her extracts again, and ſhe uſes them ſo as to make them irreſiſtible.

Soph. Will you give me a copy of this extract, to ſhew my friend?

Euph. With all my heart. I hoped to have found many helps from this treatiſe, but was diſappointed. I expected an account of the Mileſian

Mileſian Tales, which are often mentioned by thoſe who treat on this ſubject, and I made a brief extract, of what fills many pages in Monſ. *Huet*'s book.

He ſays that the Ionians were the moſt corrupt and diſſolute of all the Aſiatic Greeks,—that they fell under the dominion of *Cyrus*, when he conquered Aſia Minor,—that the Perſians imbibed their manners, and became the moſt voluptuous people in the world. But, in them and a taſte for elegant pleaſures, the Mileſians ſurpaſſed them all. They were the firſt that introduced Romance writing among the Perſians, which obtained the higheſt reputation in thoſe times.—That the Mileſian Fables are full of licentious ſtories and amorous adventures, which gave offence to thoſe of the graver ſort.—He thinks it probable that Romances were innocent till they fell into their hands, and that before that time they only recounted memorable and ſingular adventures. He ſays that their works are devoured by time, and yet, afterwards, advances ſeveral conjectures concerning them. If they were

were ſuch as he deſcribes, they are beſt buried in oblivion. It is the opinion of many learned men, that the works of *Lucian*, and likewiſe of *Apuleius*, are derived from the Mileſian fables.

Monſ. *Huet* runs over the names of many fabulous and ſome real Authors, but as they are only names, they are of no great conſequence.

Hort. Does he ſay nothing of the compoſitions of later times?

Euph. Oh yes!—he extols the French Romances of his own times, as the moſt perfect of all works of this kind; and ſays they deſerve the ſame compliment that *Horace* paid to the Iliad of *Homer*,—that they teach Morality more effectually, than the precepts of the moſt able Philoſophers.

Hort. Are not theſe the works we have juſt been criticiſing?

Euph. The very ſame. I will only give a ſpecimen of his Style,—" Monſ. *D'Urſé* " was the firſt who retrieved Romances from " barbarity, and reduced them to rules in his " incomparable

" incomparable *Aſtrea*. The moſt ingenious " and polite work which has appeared in " this kind, which eclipſed the glory which " Greece, Italy, and Spain had acquired."

Hort. Well ſaid Biſhop!—you loved Romances as well as *Heliodorus*.

Euph. He goes on yet further, and ſpeaks with admiration and aſtoniſhment of thoſe of *Mademoiſelle de Scudery*.—" That the art of " writing Romances (ſays he) might be able " to defend itſelf againſt ſcrupulous cenſures, " not only by the commendations of the Pa- " triarch *Photius*, but by the great examples " of thoſe who have applied themſelves to it, " and might juſtify itſelf by hers."

Soph. I am aſtoniſhed at what I have heard!

Euph. Oh pray liſten to one more period, which is in the true French ſtyle of Hyperbole! —" That that which had been improved by " Philoſophers, as *Athenagoras* and *Apuleius*; " —by a Roman Prætor, as *Siſenna*;—by a " Conſul, as *Petronius*;—by an Emperor, as " *Clodius Albinus*;—by a Prieſt, as *Theodo-* " *rus Prodromus*;—by Biſhops, as *Heliodo-*

" *rus*,

" *rus*, and *Achilles Tatius*;—by a Pope, as
" *Pius Secundus*;—by a Saint, as *John Da-*
" *maſcenus*;—might have the honour to be at-
" tended to, by a wiſe and virtuous maid."

Soph. Hyperbole indeed!—I hope after this *Hortenſius* will read the Romances of *Meſdemoiſelles Scudery*.

Hort. I hope you will excuſe me,—unleſs you enjoin it as a penance for the trouble I have given our ingenious friend.

Soph. I am in hopes, that this trouble may turn to good account, and that our friend may reap the fruits of her labours, in more than one reſpect,—and for this reaſon, I excuſe your penance.

Euph. We will ſpeak of that hereafter.—With your permiſſion we will now proceed to ſome remarks on the effects of Romance upon the manners of their reſpective times.

Hort. Pray do ſo,—we are come fairly to this point.

Euph. The extravagances and abſurdities of Romances, have been pointed out by many writers, but few have attempted to ſhew the

the good effects they have produced.—Will you accept the Biſhop of *Avranches* as an advocate for them?

Hort. Not unleſs he ſhews us in what reſpect mankind are benefited by them.

Euph. Perhaps you expect too much, it is not eaſy to demonſtrate the effects of writings of ſo mixed a nature. People muſt read ſomething, they cannot always be engaged by dry diſquiſitions, the mind requires ſome amuſement.—Story-telling is of ancient and reverend origin as I hope we have proved.—That theſe ſtories ſhould have a moral tendency will be generally allowed,—that they go frequently much higher, and when compoſed by people of cultivated genius and virtuous principles, they ſpeak to all the nobleſt feelings of the human heart, and excite to ſuch actions as they deſcribe, of which I ſhall give ſome remarkable inſtances. Give me leave to introduce to you a ſet of men all of whom read, and ſome of them wrote Romances;—men who, as all the world allows, had no ſmall portion of Romance in their

compoſition, and were excited by a ſtrong and enthuſiaſtic thirſt of glory, to actions honourable to themſelves, and advantageous to their country. Such were the heroes of Queen *Elizabeth*'s court; and I might reckon the Queen herſelf as an Heroine, worthy to command ſuch men.

Hort. You have well choſen this circle, for the illuſtration of the ſubject. The Prince who can ſelect, and employ ſuch men, deſerves the glory he derives from them; and while he uſes their abilities, does himſelf the greateſt honour.

Euph. Your obſervation is juſt; and there is no better Criterion of a Prince's abilities and principles, than the circle of men he draws round him.—Such was *Elizabeth*, and ſuch were her ſervants,—Sir *Philip Sydney*,——Sir *John Norris*,—the Earl of *Eſſex*,—Lord *Willoughby*,—Lord *Herbert* of *Cherbury*,—Sir *John Perrot*,—Sir *Francis Drake*,—Sir *Walter Raleigh*,— Admiral *Howard*,— Lord *Montjoy*, — Sir *Francis Vere*, — and many others.

Hort.

Hort. What a conſtellation of Heroes!—it makes one's blood grow warm at the bare mention of them.—When ſhall we ſee again ſuch men?

Euph. I will not anſwer your queſtion, but by telling you a Story.

The French army uſed to ſing the ſong of *Rolando* or *Orlando;* to excite their courage before a battle.—King *John* of France, (the ſame who died in England in 1364,) ſaid one day, to thoſe who had been ſinging this famous ſong,—"It is a long time ſince there "has been any *Rolando*'s among the French." —an old Captain made him the following anſwer,—"Sire, we ſhall ſee again the *Ro-*"*lando's*, when we have another *Charle-*"*magne.*"

Hort. A word to the wiſe!—But did any of theſe Heroes write Romances?

Euph. You have lately heard of Sir *Philip Sydney*'s works.—Did you never read the life of Lord *Herbert*, written by himſelf?

Hort. I have,—he is indeed a Hero worthy of Romance.

Euph. He certainly was a copy of theſe models, and rather approaching to the character of Don *Quixote;* but his noble ſpirit, and fine qualities, concealed or excuſed his knight-errantry. Certainly theſe men were animated by great and generous principles, to expoſe their lives continually to obtain what they thought infinitely more valuable,—an honourable name and memory. I have a curious book, of the lives and actions of Q. *Elizabeth*'s worthies, who were all men of this ſtamp. I will give you an anecdote from thence, as a ſpecimen of the ſpirit of thoſe times.

" The Lord *Montjoy* (above mentioned,) " was of a bold and daring ſpirit. When " very young, he went abroad as a volunteer " without the Queen's permiſſion, for which " he was ſeverely checked by her and forbid- " den to do ſo again;—notwithſtanding this, " he ſtole away a ſecond time, and went with " Sir *John Norris* into *Brittany* and made a " campaign there,—at his return the Queen " reproved him ſharply before the whole " court,

" court, in the following words.—Serve me
" ſo again, and I will lay you faſt enough!—
" you will never leave, till you are knock'd
" on the head, like that raſh, and inconſider-
" ate fellow *Sydney*.—It is time enough for
" you to go abroad when I ſend you, till then
" ſtay at home, read your books, and ſtudy
" the art of war, againſt you are called to
" the practice of it."

There is ſomething in this aſpiring ſpirit that affects one,—we cannot help admiring and lamenting this enthuſiaſm of glory.

Oh fatal love of fame!—Oh glorious heat!——
Only deſtructive to the brave and great!— ADDISON.

Hort. I admire with you, this avarice of fame and glory,—it warms one's heart, with a degree of their enthuſiaſm!—but ſurely, Madam, you do not aſſert that Romances inſpired theſe men to perform all theſe great actions?

Euph. They certainly had a great ſhare in them, you find yourſelf warmed at the bare mention of them; and doubtleſs they were excited by the great names they had heard and read of.

The

The effects of Romance, and true Hiſtory are not very different. When the imagination is raiſed, men do not ſtand to enquire whether the motive be true or falſe.—The love of glory has always a certain enthuſiaſm in it, which excites men to great and generous actions, and whatever ſtimulates this paſſion, muſt have the credit of the actions it performs. On the contrary, whenever this ſpirit, and this enthuſiaſm, become the objects of contempt and ridicule, mankind will ſet up for themſelves an idol of a very different kind.—They will then devote themſelves to mean or mercenary purſuits which debaſe and corrupt the mind.—The thirſt of immoderate wealth or pleaſure, will engroſs their attentions and deſires; or elſe they will ſink into a ſtate of ſupine indolence, and become entirely negligent of what they owe to themſelves, to their connexions, or to their country.—There muſt be a ſtimulus to excite men to action, and ſuch as is the motive, ſuch will the action be.

Hort. I confeſs that your reaſoning is juſt, and I ſigh over the compariſon.—The ambition

tion of our age, and country, is indeed of a very different kind.

Euph. My favourite Romance-writer, *John Barclay*, deſcribes it as if he had lived in later times.—"The youth of our country, "ſays he, inſtead of deſiring to ſignalize "themſelves abroad, contract an avaritious "deſire of enriching themſelves at home, by "the ſpoils of their own country."

Hort. The painting is ſtrong, and the picture but too like.

Euph. Compare the times paſt with the preſent; and ſee on which ſide the balance will turn; in favour of public ſpirit, or private virtue. Let us ſuppoſe the character of Don *Quixote* realized, with all its virtues and abſurdities. I would aſk whether ſuch a man is not more reſpectable, and more amiable, than a human being wholly immerſed in low, groveling, effeminate, or mercenary purſuits, without one grain of private virtue, or public ſpirit; whoſe only thoughts, wiſhes, and deſires are abſorbed in a worthleſs ſelf?

Hort. But is there no medium between theſe two extremes?

Euph.

Euph. Doubtleſs there is,—but mankind are apt to run into extremes. We ridicule the enthuſiaſm of honour and glory, and run headlong into the gulph of folly and diſſipation—we throw aſide forms and ceremonies, and ſink into careleſſneſs and negligence;—we deſpiſe decorum and preciſeneſs, and plunge into licentiouſneſs.

Hort. Who then ſhall draw the line?—who ſhall aſſign the bounds to faſhion, and bring it within the barriers of reaſon and morality. Oh honour, venerable and proſtituted name!—who ſhall aſcertain thee, and eſtabliſh thy dominion?—who ſhall put it out of the power of knaves and fools, to uſurp thy name, and wear thy trophies?—when ſhalt thou be reſtored to univerſal reverence?

Euph. That will be, when it is ſeen, as upon the reverſe of a Roman medal, with virtue for its inſeparable companion, with the old motto,—*Honos et Virtus.*

Soph. Bravo, my friends!—It ſeems to me that you both have imbibed a good portion of the Enthuſiaſm you have deſcribed, and I have not heard you with inſenſibility.

Euph.

Euph. You do well to recall us to the ſubject of our converſation. Romances have for many ages paſt been read and admired, lately it has been the faſhion to decry and ridicule them; but to an unprejudiced perſon, this will prove nothing but the variations of times, manners, and opinions.—Writers of all denominations,—Princes and Prieſts,—Biſhops and Heroes,—have their day, and then are out of date.—Sometimes indeed a work of intrinſic merit will revive, and renew its claim to immortality: but this happineſs falls to the lot of few, in compariſon of thoſe who roll down the ſtream of time, and fall into the gulph of oblivion.

Upon the whole, I think, we may conclude, that Romances in general are neither the ſublime compoſitions which their enthuſiaſtic admirers have repreſented them; or ſo contemptible and pernicious as ſome prejudiced men have deſcribed them.—If upon a fair and impartial review of them, it appears, that they inculcated the greater principles of virtue and honour; though (in the

times of Gothic ignorance) they might be productive of many abſurdities, and ſome real evils; yet they were by no means ſo dangerous, as many writings of later times, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter.

I have the courage to maintain that the moſt eminent works of this claſs are entitled to our notice and reſpect; and that even the moſt heavy and prolix of them, are, at leaſt, as innocent and inoffenſive, as any of the reſt of the genuine offspring of dulneſs.

Hort. I entirely agree with you. I aſk pardon for the injuries I have done them, and promiſe you that I never again will diſturb their repoſe.

Soph. I cannot forbear ſmiling at his *Palinode*; it may be taken whatever way you pleaſe to underſtand it.

Euph. Then I ſhall certainly take it the beſt way.

Hort. I wiſh you to take it in the way that does you moſt honour: for I am ſincerely obliged to you for the entertainment and information you have given me; and as ſoon as

as your leiſure will permit, I beg you to meet at my houſe and continue your progreſs.

Euph. I ſhall wait on you, as ſoon as I have collected materials, and I beg you to give me your aſſiſtance in future.

Soph. I ſincerely wiſh it may be in my power to help you.—Adieu!

EVENING

EVENING VII.

Hortenſius, Sophronia, Euphraſia.

Hort. WE have now, I preſume, done with the Romances, and are expecting your inveſtigation of Novels.

Euph. It is now that I begin to be ſenſible in how arduous an undertaking I have engaged, and to fear I ſhall leave it unfiniſhed.

Hort. Have no fears, Madam; we ſhall not ſuffer you to leave off preſently. We expect the completion of the plan you have given us.

Soph. If I judge rightly, the concluſion is yet a great way off.

Euph. This is one of the circumſtances that frighten me. If I ſkim over the ſubject lightly it will be doing nothing; and if I am too minute I may grow dull and tedious, and tire my hearers.

Hort.

Hort. You muſt aim at the medium you recommended to us.

Euph. What Goddeſs, or what muſe muſt I invoke to guide me through theſe vaſt, unexplored regions of fancy?—regions inhabited by wiſdom and folly,—by wit and ſtupidity,—by religion and prophaneneſs,—by morality and licentiouſneſs.—How ſhall I ſeparate and diſtinguiſh the various and oppoſite qualities of theſe ſtrange concomitants?—point out ſome as the objects of admiration and reſpect, and others of abhorrence and contempt?

Hort. The ſubject warms you already, and when that is the caſe, you will never be heard coldly.—Go on and proſper.

Euph. In this fairy land are many Caſtles of various Architecture.—Some are built in the air, and have no foundation at all,—others are compoſed of ſuch heavy materials, that their own weight ſinks them into the earth, where they lie buried under their own ruins, and leave not a trace behind,—a third ſort are built upon a real and ſolid foundation,

and

and remain impregnable againſt all the attacks of Criticiſm, and perhaps even of time itſelf.

Soph. So ſo!—we are indeed got into Fairy-land; it is here that I expect to meet with many of my acquaintance, and I ſhall challenge them whenever I do.

Euph. I hope that you will aſſiſt my labours.—I will drop the metaphor, and tell you that I mean to take notice only of the moſt eminent works of this kind:—to paſs over others ſlightly, and leave the worſt in the depths of oblivion.

The word *Novel* in all languages ſignifies ſomething new. It was firſt uſed to diſtinguiſh theſe works from Romance, though they have lately been confounded together, and are frequently miſtaken for each other.

Soph. But how will you draw the line of diſtinction, ſo as to ſeparate them effectually, and prevent future miſtakes?

Euph. I will attempt this diſtinction, and I preſume if it is properly done it will be followed,—If not, you are but where you were before.

before. The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous perſons and things. —The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, deſcribes what never happened nor is likely to happen.—The Novel gives a familiar relation of ſuch things, as paſs every day before our eyes, ſuch as may happen to our friend, or to ourſelves; and the perfection of it, is to repreſent every ſcene, in ſo eaſy and natural a manner, and to make them appear ſo probable, as to deceive us into a perſuaſion (at leaſt while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or diſtreſſes, of the perſons in the ſtory, as if they were our own.

Hort. You have well diſtinguiſhed, and it is neceſſary to make this diſtinction.—I clearly perceive the difference between the Romance and Novel, and am ſurprized they ſhould be confounded together.

Euph. I have ſometimes thought it has been done inſidiouſly, by thoſe who endeavour

vour to render all writings of both kinds contemptible.

Soph. I have generally obſerved that men of learning have ſpoken of them with the greateſt diſdain, eſpecially collegians.

Euph. Take care what you ſay, my friend, they are a ſet of men who are not to be offended with impunity. Yet they deal in Romances, though of a different kind.—Some have taken up an opinion upon truſt in others whoſe judgment they prefer to their own.—Others having ſeen a few of the worſt or dulleſt among them, have judged of all the reſt by them;—juſt as ſome men effect to deſpiſe our ſex, becauſe they have only converſed with the worſt part of it.

Hort. Your ſex knows how to retort upon ours, and to puniſh us for our offences againſt you. Proceed however.

Euph. The Italians were the firſt that excelled in Novel-writing.—I cannot aſcertain the date of any of their earlieſt Novels. *Cynthio Giraldi*, and the Decameron of *Boccace* are ſome of the firſt, and ſerved as a model to many that were written afterwards.

Hort.

Hort. One Original work of Genius, always produces a ſwarm of imitations.

Euph. Cervantes publiſhed his exemplary Novels in the year 1613.—They are twelve in number, and their titles are as follows:—*The little Gipſey—The liberal Lover—The Force of Blood—Ricconete and Cotadillo—The Spaniſh Engliſh Lady—The Glaſs Doctor—The jealous Eſtramaduran—The illuſtrious Chambermaid—The two Ladies—The Lady Cornelia—The deceitful Marriage*—I mention theſe by name, becauſe (though they are well known) they have been introduced into other works and aſcribed to other Authors. *Cervantes* boaſts in his Preface, that he was the firſt that ever wrote Novels in the Spaniſh language, which is a proof that he intended them as a different ſpecies, from all his other works.

Hort. I make no doubt that the ſeed once ſown, produced as plentiful a crop there, as it did in the reſt of Europe.

Euph. No, I think not.—It went on fair and ſoftly in Spain, but in France it multiplied to infinity, as it has ſince done in England.

land.—The firſt Novels in France were thoſe of *Scarron*, who probably took the hint from *Cervantes*.—His Novels were ſoon buried and forgotten, his beſt work is called *le Roman Comique*, which I imagine he intended as a kind of Burleſque on the heroic Romance, for otherwiſe, it is more properly a Novel, than his other pieces.—It is very badly tranſlated into Engliſh, by the Title of the *Comical Romance*, whereas it ought to be the *Theatrical Romance*, being the Adventures of a company of ſtrolling players;—under all its diſadvantages, it is ſtill natural, lively, and entertaining.

Soph. I have read an early Novel tranſlated from the French, which was much admired in its day, called *Zayde*.

Euph. I thank you for reminding me of it.—It was written by M. *Segrais*, and the Treatiſe on the Origin of Romance by M. *Huet*, was prefixed to it—in it the good Biſhop pays as many compliments to M. *Segrais*, as he does to M. *D'Urſe* and Madamoiſ. *Scudery*.

Soph. But give us your opinion of *Zayde?*

Euph.

Euph. It is ſuperior to *Scarron*'s Novels, but I think, not equal to thoſe of *Cervantes*; which have all ſtrong marks of his genius and ſpirit.

Soph. Allow me to remind you of the *Princeſs of Cleves*, the *Captives*, *Ines de Caſtro*, and I ſhall recollect others of the ſame date.

Euph. You oblige me.—All the laſt are within the limits of mediocrity, but the *Princeſs of Cleves* is of worſe tendency, for it influences young minds in favour of a certain *fatality* in love matters, which encourages them to plead errors of the imagination, for faults of the heart, which if indulged will undermine both their virtue and peace.

Soph. You have not mentioned *le Sage?*

Euph. Le Sage is indeed a writer of note, he is the Author of the *Devil upon two Sticks*, (as the *Diable Boitu* is abſurdly tranſlated,) of the *Bachelor of Salamanca*, and of *Gil Blas*, which is a Novel of firſt rate merit.

Hort. There I agree with you.—*Voltaire*, who never praiſes without good reaſon, ſpeaks of it and its Author in theſe terms.—" *Son*

" *Gil*

" *Gil Blas eſt demeuré, parcequ'il y a du na-*
" *turel.*"

It is written in ſuch a manner as to pleaſe all times and all people.—He ſpeaks alſo of Novels written by Count *Antony Hamilton*, which were as lively as *Scarron*'s, without their Buffoonery.—Are you acquainted with his writings?

Euph. I have read his Memoirs of the Count *de Grammont*, which are written with the vivacity of a wit, and the eaſe of a fine gentleman; they are ſomewhat exceptionable on the ſcore of morals, and yet as little as can be expected from the Memoirs of a licentious court, that of *Charles* the Second, and the life of a man of pleaſure like the Count *de Grammont*. I do not reckon this among the Novels, becauſe it has truth for its foundation, though indeed highly embelliſhed.—Of his Novels I know nothing, tho' I have made a ſtrict enquiry after them, and I conjecture that they never were popular.

Soph. I remember a book called *La Belle Aſſemblé*, that was very much read formerly, and I think it was well ſpoken of.

Euph.

Euph. It was written ſome time after the books we have named, and it is a very unexceptionable and entertaining work of its kind. It carries marks of imitation of *Boccace*'s *Decameron*, and ſome of the ſtories are too far out of the limits of probability. Let us next conſider ſome of the early Novels of our own country.

We had early tranſlations of the beſt Novels of all other Countries, but for a long time produced very few of our own. One of the earlieſt I know of is the *Cyprian Academy*, by *Robert Baron* in the reign of *Charles* the Firſt.—Among our early Novel-writers we muſt reckon Mrs. *Behn*.—There are ſtrong marks of Genius in all this lady's works, but unhappily, there are ſome parts of them, very improper to be read by, or recommended to virtuous minds, and eſpecially to youth.—She wrote in an age, and to a court of licentious manners, and perhaps we ought to aſcribe to theſe cauſes the looſe turn of her ſtories.—Let us do juſtice to her merits, and caſt the veil of compaſſion over her faults.—She died in the

the year 1689, and lies buried in the cloiſters of Weſtminſter Abbey.—The inſcription will ſhew how high ſhe ſtood in eſtimation at that time.

Hort. Are you not partial to the ſex of this Genius?—when you excuſe in her, what you would not to a man?

Euph. Perhaps I may, and you muſt excuſe me if I am ſo, eſpecially as this lady had many fine and amiable qualities, beſides her genius for writing.

Soph. Pray let her reſt in peace,—you were ſpeaking of the inſcription on her monument, I do not remember it.

Euph. It is as follows:

Mrs. APHRA BEHN, 1689.
Here lies a proof that wit can never be
Defence enough againſt mortality.

Let me add that Mrs. *Behn* will not be forgotten, ſo long as the Tragedy of *Oroonoko* is acted; it was from her ſtory of that illuſtrious African, that Mr. *Southern* wrote that play, and the moſt affecting parts of it are taken almoſt literally from her.

Hort.

Hort. Peace be to her *manes!*—I ſhall not diſturb her, or her works.

Euph. I ſhall not recommend them to your peruſal, *Hortenſius.*

The next female writer of this claſs is Mrs. *Manley*, whoſe works are ſtill more exceptionable than Mrs. *Behn*'s, and as much inferior to them in point of merit.—She hoarded up all the public and private ſcandal within her reach, and poured it forth, in a work too well known in the laſt age, though almoſt forgotten in the preſent; a work that partakes of the ſtyle of the Romance, and the Novel. I forbear the name, and further obſervations on it, as Mrs. *Manley*'s works are ſinking gradually into oblivion. I am ſorry to ſay they were once in faſhion, which obliges me to mention them, otherwiſe I had rather be ſpared the pain of diſgracing an Author of my own ſex.

Soph. It muſt be confeſſed that theſe books of the laſt age, were of worſe tendency than any of thoſe of the preſent.

Euph. My dear friend, there were bad books at all times, for thoſe who ſought for them.—Let us paſs them over in ſilence.

Hort.

Hort. No not yet.—Let me help your memory to one more Lady-Author of the ſame claſs.—Mrs. *Heywood.*—She has the ſame claim upon you as thoſe you have laſt mentioned.

Euph. I had intended to have mentioned Mrs. *Heywood* though in a different way, but I find you will not ſuffer any part of her character to eſcape you.

Hort. Why ſhould ſhe be ſpared any more than the others?

Euph. Becauſe ſhe repented of her faults, and employed the latter part of her life in expiating the offences of the former.—There is reaſon to believe that the examples of the two ladies we have ſpoken of, ſeduced Mrs. *Heywood* into the ſame track; ſhe certainly wrote ſome amorous novels in her youth, and alſo two books of the ſame kind as Mrs. *Manley*'s capital work, all of which I hope are forgotten.

Hort. I fear they will not be ſo fortunate, they will be known to poſterity by the infamous immortality, conferred upon them by *Pope* in his Dunciad.

Euph.

Euph. Mr. *Pope* was ſevere in his caſtigations, but let us be juſt to merit of every kind. Mrs. *Heywood* had the ſingular good fortune to recover a loſt reputation, and the yet greater honour to atone for her errors.—She devoted the remainder of her life and labours to the ſervice of virtue. Mrs. *Heywood* was one of the moſt voluminous female writers that ever England produced, none of her latter works are deſtitute of merit, though they do not riſe to the higheſt pitch of excellence.—*Betſey Thoughtleſs* is reckoned her beſt Novel; but thoſe works by which ſhe is moſt likely to be known to poſterity, are the *Female Spectator*, and the *Inviſible Spy*.—This lady died ſo lately as the year 1758.

Soph. I have heard it often ſaid that Mr. *Pope* was too ſevere in his treatment of this lady: it was ſuppoſed that ſhe had given ſome private offence, which he reſented publicly, as was too much his way.

Hort. That is very likely, for he was not of a forgiving diſpoſition.—If I have been too ſevere alſo, you, ladies, muſt forgive me in behalf of your ſex.

Euph. Truth is ſometimes ſevere.—Mrs. *Heywood*'s wit and ingenuity were never denied. I would be the laſt to vindicate her faults, but the firſt to celebrate her return to virtue, and her atonement for them.

Soph. May her firſt writings be forgotten, and the laſt ſurvive to do her honour!

Euph. Let us proceed to other writers.—as I purpoſe in future to take only notice of ſuch Novels as are originals, or elſe of extraordinary merit, I muſt beg your allowance for all trifling ſlips of memory, for errors in chronology, and all other miſtakes of equal conſequence.—I muſt alſo have leave to mention Engliſh and Foreign books indifferently, juſt as they happen to riſe to my memory, and obſervation.

Hort. It is but juſt that you ſhould have theſe, and every other allowance you can require, we have already laid a heavy tax upon you.

Euph. You ſee I have many helps from my notes, and I hope to receive further aſſiſtance from you both.—I will proceed with my progreſs.

greſs. The life of *Cleveland*, natural ſon of *Oliver Cromwell*, is one of the *old Novels*, if I may be allowed the expreſſion; I do not certainly know the Author, nor yet the date of the firſt edition.—When a Novel came out but ſeldom, it was eagerly received and generally read, this was at the time called a work of uncommon merit, but it will not bear a compariſon with thoſe that have been written ſince. There is originality and regularity in it. The incidents are too much of the marvellous kind, but ſome of the ſcenes are very pathetic, and there is buſineſs enough to keep the reader's attention conſtantly awake, and above all other merit, it has a moral tendency.

Hort. I have heard this book aſcribed to *Daniel de Foe*, who as I think was alſo the Author of *Robinſon Cruſoe*.

Euph. His title to the laſt mentioned is not quite clear.—It is ſaid that he was truſted with a manuſcript of *Alexander Selkirk*'s, who met with an adventure of the ſame kind as *Cruſoe*'s, and that he ſtole his materials from

thence, and then returned the manuſcript to the Author.—When *Selkirk*'s book was publiſhed, it was taken but little notice of; it had more truth, but leſs Romance, and beſide, the curioſity of the public was gratified, and they looked on *Cruſoe* as the Original, and *Selkirk* as the copy only.

Hort. That was hard indeed, but I fear not unprecedented; you will give us your opinion of the book, excluſive of this circumſtance.

Euph. Robinſon Cruſoe was publiſhed in the year 1720.—*Gaudentio di Lucca* in 1725. I ſhall ſpeak of theſe two books together, becauſe there is a ſtrong reſemblance between them, the ſame marks of Originality appear in both.—They both give account of unknown or rather of *Ideal* countries, but in ſo natural and probable a manner, that they carry the reader with them wherever they pleaſe, in the midſt of the moſt extraordinary occurrences. *Gaudentio di Lucca* is written by the pen of a maſter, it is imputed to Biſhop *Berkely*, and is not unworthy of that truly

truly venerable man.—There is a greatneſs of deſign, and a depth of penetration into the cauſes of the health and proſperity of a ſtate, and of the moral evils that firſt weaken and undermine, and finally cauſe the ruin of it.—The vaſt conſequence of the good or bad education of youth, on which depends the health, vigour, and happineſs of a nation.—Theſe circumſtances give this book a manifeſt ſuperiority to the other, in many other reſpects they are both equally entitled to our plaudit.—But what gives a ſtill higher value to theſe two books, they are evidently written to promote the cauſe of religion and virtue, and may ſafely be put into the hands of youth.—Such books cannot be too ſtrongly recommended, as under the diſguiſe of fiction, warm the heart with the love of virtue, and by that means, excite the reader to the practice of it.

Hort. A warm plaudit you have given them.—I remember to have read *Robinſon Cruſoe* when very young, but I have forgot it, and ever ſince I have looked upon it as a book for children only; but I will read it again upon your recommendation, and judge of its merits.

Euph.

Euph. That is the certain conſequence of putting theſe books too ſoon into the hands of children.—I will be bold to ſay a youth who reads them at a proper age, will never forget them.—Let me alſo beg you will read *Gaudentio di Lucca.*

Hort. I will certainly read them both at my beſt leiſure.

Soph. But let me beg you to get the old Edition of *Cruſoe*, for this is one of the books, which *Fanaticiſm* has laid her paw upon, and altered it to her own tenets, and ſhe has added ſome of her own reveries at the end of it, called *Viſions of the Angelical World.*—If *Hortenſius* ſhould once dip into that part of it, it would entirely diſcredit our recommendation.

Euph. You ſay true, I will get him the old Edition, which is the beſt.

Hort. Pray do you call theſe Books Romances or Novels?

Euph. They partake of the nature of both, but I conſider them as of a different ſpecies from either, as works ſingular and original.—I ſhall have occaſion to place ſome later works

works under this claſs. But it is time for us to adjourn till next Thurſday.

Hort. I ſhall not fail to meet you.

Soph. At my houſe.—No other engagement ſhall prevent it.

Hort. Agreed,—none could give me equal pleaſure.

Euph. You are always my kind and indulgent friends, and your approbation is the crown of my labours.

EVENING VIII.

Hortenſius, Euphraſia, Sophronia.

Soph. MY good friends, I rejoice to ſee you.—We are now coming to a period within my memory and obſervation, and I ſhall aſk *Euphraſia* a few queſtions.

Euph. As many as you pleaſe.—I expect your aſſiſtance.

Soph. Pray give us your opinion of the modern French Novels?

Euph. I will in a few words:—That the beſt are the moſt *excellent*, and the worſt the moſt *execrable* of all others; and moſt of thoſe I have read, fall under one or the other of theſe denominations.

Soph. You will give us your remarks upon the beſt of them.

Euph.

Euph. Are there any that you have particularly in view?

Soph. I was thinking of thoſe of Monſ. *Marivaux*—the *Payſan Parvenue*, and *Marianne*.

Euph. The works of *Marivaux* are of capital merit, they are pictures of real life and manners, and they have the advantages of highly poliſhed language and ſentiments; the *Payſan Parvenue* is ſomewhat exceptionable, his French morality is not ſuitable to an old Engliſh palate, but his *Marianne* has no ſuch abatements, "ſhe needs no foil, but ſhines by her own light."—It has indeed been tranſlated into Engliſh more than once, but never ſo as to do juſtice to the Original.

The firſt was publiſhed in 1742, it was a very poor literal tranſlation, but yet it was read by every body with avidity; ſoon after another attempt was made by a ſtill worſe hand, this is called *Indiana, or the virtuous Orphan*, in this piece of patchwork, many of the fine reflexions, the moſt valuable part of the work, are omitted, the Story, left unfiniſhed by the

death of M. *Marivaux*, is finiſhed by the ſame bungler, and in the moſt abſurd manner. It puts me in mind of what was ſaid to a certain tranſlator of *Virgil*.

Read the commandments, friend,—tranſlate no further,
For it is written, thou ſhalt do no murther.

Soph. Is the *Payſan Parvenue* tranſlated into Engliſh?

Euph. It is, but not much better than *Marianne*, nor is it ſo well known; it is frequently confounded with the *Payſanne Parvenue* of the Chevalier *Mouhy*, which without half its merits is much more popular.—This laſt work has been twice tranſlated, the firſt bears the title of *the fortunate Country Maid*, the ſecond is called *the Virtuous Villager*, or *the Virgin's Victory*, both are well known to the readers of Circulating Libraries.

Hort. Did not M. *Crebillon* write ſomething of this kind?

Euph. Les Egarement de Cœur et d'Eſprit, which was never popular in England, though it was in France.—Some pious perſon, fearing it might poiſon the minds of youth (it is really exceptionable,) wrote a book of meditations

tions with the ſame title, and *this* was the book that *Yorick*'s *fille de Chambre* was purchaſing in the bookſeller's ſhop.

Hort. All this is Greek to me—My intelligence came by reading Mr. *Gray*'s letters to his friends, in one of which he wiſhes to read eternally new Romances of *Marivaux* and *Crebillon.*

Euph. You find that Mr. *Gray* did not deſpiſe theſe books.

Hort. So it ſeems.—But he did not know how to call them.

Euph. That was becauſe he never had read the true *Romances*, but confounded all fictions under that name; but I underſtand your meaning, and your raillery alſo.

Hort. I want to catch you tripping, but you always elude my traps.—Proceed, I will not interrupt you again impertinently.

Soph. Pray was not *Marianne* finiſhed by Madame *Riccoboni?*

Euph. No—but I wiſh it had.—She wrote one of the books or diviſions, to ſhew that ſhe could write like M. *Marivaux*, and then gave it over.

Soph.

Soph. Don't you think Madame *Riccoboni* a writer of great merit?

Euph. Capital.—Her Novels are firſt-rates, and ſhe wrote ſeveral pieces for the Stage with ſucceſs.—I think *Jenny Saliſbury* below the reſt of her novels, becauſe in it ſhe attempted to paint Engliſh manners, without being ſufficiently acquainted them, and ſhe has made ſtrange work with Engliſh names and families.—Her letters of Madame *de Sancerre*—and *Valiere* are excellent,—and all her other works are in the firſt rank of Novels.

Soph. I have ſeen a collection of Novels publiſhed by Dr. *Croxall*, are they of any eſtimation?

Euph. They are an early ſelection of Novels, tranſlated from the *Italian*, *Spaniſh* and *French* writers, of which we have made mention, none of them deſerve farther particularizing.

Mrs. *St. Aubin*'s works are in the rank of mediocrity likewiſe.

M. *Prevot* was the Author of the *Marquis de Bretagne*, the *Chevalier de Grieux*, and ſome

ſome other pieces which belong to the ſame claſs.

Hort. You have not yet made mention of the moſt eminent writers of our country, *Richardſon* and *Fielding*.

Euph. I hope you did not think it poſſible for me to forget them. Mr. *Richardſon* publiſhed his works, at a conſiderable diſtance of time from each other.—*Pamela* was the firſt, it met with a very warm reception, as it well deſerved to do.—I remember my mother and aunts being ſhut up in the parlour reading *Pamela*, and I took it very hard that I was excluded.—I have ſince ſeen it put into the hands of children, ſo much are their underſtandings riper than mine, or ſo much are our methods of Education improved ſince that time.

Soph. It is a general miſtake in regard to the youth of our time, they are put too forward in all reſpects. Let us return to *Pamela*, I can remember the time when this book was the faſhion, the perſon that had not read *Pamela*, was diſqualified for converſation, of which it was the principal ſubject for a long time.—You will give

give us your opinion of this, and the other works of Mr. *Richardſon?*

Euph. To praiſe the works of Mr. *Richardſon* is to hold a candle to the Sun, their merits are well underſtood in other countries beſides our own; they have been tranſlated into *French*, *Italian*, and *German*, and they are read in *Engliſh* frequently, by the people of the firſt rank in all the politeſt countries in Europe.

A Lady of quality in France, ſent an Epigram to one of Mr. *Richardſon*'s family ſoon after his death which I will give you here.

RICHARDSON tu nés plus!
Le cœur humain en vous regret
Son plus profound Obſervateur,
Son plus eloquent interpret,
Son plus parfait Legiſlateur.

I was deſired to give a literal tranſlation of it.

Hort. You will favour us with it, I hope?

Euph. It is as follows:——

RICHARDSON is now no more!
Then may the human heart deplore
Its moſt profound inveſtigator,
Its patron, friend, and regulator,
And its moſt perfect Legiſlator.

Hort.

Hort. Very close indeed to the Original.

Soph. But your remarks on *Richardson*'s works ?

Euph. I will hazard a few remarks on them, which perhaps I may be allowed, because no person whatever has read them over with more pleasure and delight than myself.

It seems to me that *Pamela* is the *Chef'd' OEuvre* of Mr. *Richardson.*—The originality, the beautiful simplicity of the manners and language of the charming maid, are interesting past expression; and find a short way to the heart, which it engages by its best and noblest feelings.—There needs no other proof of a bad and corrupted heart, than its being insensible to the distresses, and incapable to the rewards of virtue.—I should want no other criterion of a *good* or *bad* heart, than the manner in which a young person was affected, by reading *Pamela.*

Hort. Your plaudit is a warm one.—But *Richardson* is a writer all your own; your sex are more obliged to him and *Addison,* than to all other men-authors.

Euph.

Euph. I deny that.—We have many other redoubtable champions as I ſhall bring proof enough,—and no man is degraded by defending us, for the female cauſe is the cauſe of virtue.

Hort. I mean not to degrade your champions or their cauſe.—But let us hear your critique on Mr. *Richardſon*'s other works?

Euph. It was yourſelf who digreſſed from the ſubject. I have but little more to ſay of them; that all are of capital merit is indiſputable; but it ſeems to me that *Pamela* has the moſt originality.—*Grandiſon* the greateſt regularity and equality.—*Clariſſa* the higheſt graces, and moſt defects.

Mr. *Richardſon* was beſides the firſt who wrote Novels in the Epiſtolary ſtyle, and he was truly an Original writer.

Hort. Have I your leave to make a few obſervations?

Euph. Certainly,—or to what purpoſe do we meet?

Hort. I allow the merit of this writer, and I reſpect his principles,—but I have ſome objections

jections to the manner of his executing his deſigns—1ſt. His inſupportable prolixity.—2dly. From his works have ſprung up a ſwarm of paltry Novels in the letter-writing way, to the great exerciſe of our patience.—And 3dly, they have taught many young girls to wire-draw their language, and to ſpin away long letters out of nothing.

Euph. You have given me materials for a longer diſcuſſion than the nature of our converſation will admit of, I will anſwer them as briefly as poſſible.—To the firſt objection,—Every man is to ſpeak and write his own Engliſh, ſome take a larger compaſs than others, but if the language is good, and the end anſwers the reader's time and attention, we have no right to complain.—If you have a mind to ſee an Epitomé of *Richardſon*'s works, there is ſuch a publication, wherein the narrative is preſerved; but you muſt no longer expect the graces of *Richardſon*, nor his pathetic addreſſes to the heart, they are all evaporated and only the dry ſtory remains.—Perhaps this abridgment is the beſt reply to your objection.

tion.—To the ſecond, No author is anſwerable for faults of his imitators, and you have before obſerved that every Original writer is followed by a ſwarm of them, but you will not ſurely for that reaſon depreciate the Original writer.—To the third,—Let the young girls bear the faults of the letters they write, let them copy *Richardſon* as often as they pleaſe, and it will be owing to the defects of their underſtandings, or judgments, if they do not improve by him. We could not ſay as much of the reading Ladies of the laſt age.

Soph. No truly, for their ſtudies were the French and Spaniſh Romances, and the writings of Mrs *Behn*, Mrs. *Manley*, and Mrs. *Heywood*.

Hort. There is great weight in your obſervations, and yet I cannot but obſerve that you do not deny the force of my objections; you only extenuate them,—but I will not urge you to any farther reply at this time.—I agree with you that no Author is anſwerable for thoſe effects, which his works are not intended to produce.

Soph.

Soph. Let me beg you to forbear any further digreſſions, and ſuffer *Euphraſia* to proceed in her progreſs without interruption.

Hort. I ſtand corrected Madam.—I beg you to proceed.

Euph. The next Author upon the liſt, and whom *Hortenſius* feared I ſhould *forget*, is *Henry Fielding*, Eſq. whoſe works are univerſally known and admired.—As I conſider wit only as a ſecondary merit, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that his writings are as much inferior to *Richardſon*'s in morals and exemplary characters, as they are ſuperior in wit and learning.—Young men of warm paſſions and not ſtrict principles, are always deſirous to ſhelter themſelves under the ſanction of mixed characters, wherein virtue is allowed to be predominant.—In this light the character of *Tom Jones* is capable of doing much miſchief; and for this reaſon a tranſlation of this book was prohibited in France.—On the contrary no harm can poſſibly ariſe from the imitation of a perfect character, though the attempt ſhould fall ſhort of the original.

Soph.

Soph. This is an indiſputable truth,—there are many objectionable ſcenes in *Fielding*'s works, which I think *Hortenſius* will not defend.

Hort. My objections were in character, and yours are ſo likewiſe; as you have defended *Richardſon*, ſo I will defend *Fielding*.—I allow there is ſome foundation for your remarks, nevertheleſs in all *Fielding*'s works, virtue has always the ſuperiority ſhe ought to have, and challenges the honours that are juſtly due to her, the general tenor of them is in her favour, and it were happy for us, if our language had no greater cauſe of complaint in her behalf.

Euph. There we will agree with you.—Have you any further obſervations to make upon *Fielding*'s writings?

Hort. Since you refer this part of your taſk to me, I will offer a few more remarks.—*Fielding*'s *Amelia* is in much lower eſtimation than his *Joſeph Andrews* or *Tom Jones*; which have both received the ſtamp of public applauſe.—He likewiſe wrote ſeveral dramatic pieces

pieces of various merits, but theſe and his other works have no place in our preſent retroſpect.—Leſt you ſhould think me too partial to the merits of this writer, I will give you the ſentence of an hiſtorian upon him.

" The Genius of *Cervantes* (ſays Dr. *Smol-*
" *let*) was transfuſed into the Novels of *Field-*
" *ing*, who painted the characters, and ridi-
" culed the follies of life, with equal ſtrength,
" humour and propriety."

Euph. We are willing to join with you in paying the tribute due to *Fielding*'s Genius, humour, and knowledge of mankind, but he certainly painted human nature as *it is*, rather than as *it ought to be.*

Soph. Theſe two laſt writers have detained your attention too long, I fear that you will cut us ſhort for it on ſome future occaſion. I grudge every digreſſion that retards our progreſs.

Euph. The two laſt mentioned are of the firſt eminence, and had a claim to more than common notice; but though we ſometimes take a compaſs, our work does not ſtand ſtill in

in the mean time, we will now proceed on our inquiry.

Miſs *Sarah Fielding*'s works are not unworthy next to be mentioned after her brother's, if they do not equal them in wit and learning, they excel in ſome other material merits, that are more beneficial to their readers.—They well deſerve the protection of your ſex *Hortenſius*, and the plaudit of ours. The diſtinguiſhing marks of her beſt characters are ſimplicity of manners and benevolence of heart.

Hort. You muſt bring me acquainted with this lady's works, pray what are their titles?

Euph. The hiſtory of David Simple.—The Counteſs of Delwyn—Ophelia—Letters by the principal Characters in David Simple—The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia—and laſtly, *A tranſlation of Xenophon's Socrates*, which is reckoned her capital work.

Soph. Pray did ſhe not alſo write a book, called, *The Governeſs, or little Female Academy*, for the uſe of Schools?

Euph.

Euph. I beg her pardon for omitting it, and I thank you for reminding me of it, for it does honour to the head and heart of the Author.—Miſs *Fielding* was one of thoſe truly eſtimable writers, whoſe fame ſmells ſweet, and will do ſo to late poſterity, one who never wrote "A Line that dying ſhe would "wiſh to blot."

Soph. What a pleaſure to pay the tribute due to ſuch a character!

Euph. How much happier, if one could ſtimulate others to imitate it!

Hort. You are ready enough to pay due reſpect to writers of your own ſex, but you are rather ſevere upon ſome of ours.

Euph. I hope not,—I wiſh to be impartial. But I will not begin an altercation with you at this time, leſt it ſhould interrupt our buſineſs, hereafter I will demand your objections, and endeavour to anſwer them all.

Hort. I deſire you will proceed in your own way.

Euph. It is time for us to adjourn.

Soph.

Soph. I am impatient to proceed in our progreſs, I foreſee we are not near the concluſion, and though I wiſh to get forward, I am in no haſte for the end.

Hort. Nor I, believe me.—We meet at my houſe next Thurſday.

Euph. I begin to find this undertaking grow heavy upon me, I foreſee many and great difficulties in my way, and am in doubt whether I ſhall get to the end of my journey as I firſt intended, or ſtop ſhort by the way.

Hort. Don't think of it, we ſhall not ſuffer you to ſtop ſhort.—Take a week's repoſe, and you will return to your taſk with renewed ſtrength and alacrity; and conſider whether you cannot make more uſe of us, to lighten the burthen to you.

Euph. I thank you, and will conſider of it, I will explain myſelf further at our next meeting.—I wiſh you a good night!

Soph. I ſhall think the time long till our next meeting. Adieu!

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.